November, 1991 - Vol 8 No 11

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Role Playing Games Special Issue

The Australian COMMODORE and AMIGA REVIEW

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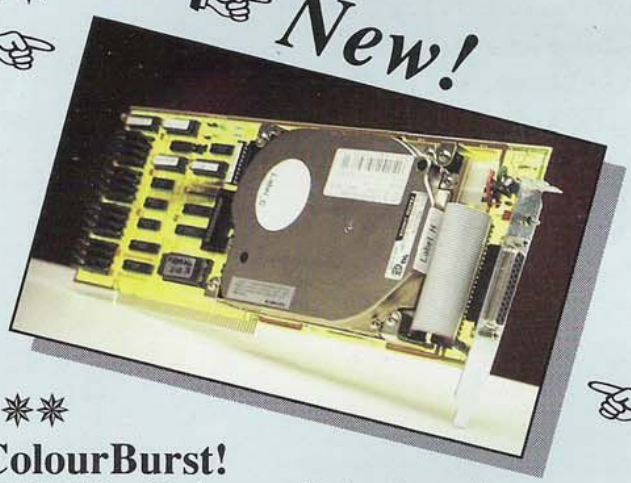

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ACAR The Australian Commodore and Amiga Review

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Editorial

When I first started out on a home computer I dreamed of owning a Sinclair ZX-80. Available in kit form for around $199, the 1K ZX-80 boasted a flat membrane keyboard and blocky monochrome graphics. When you pressed a key the screen would flash - it was too much for the CPU to handle keeping the screen display going *and* reading the keyboard. I never actually bought a ZX-80. However, I remember spending a long weekend coding a short program on paper. At the finish I totalled up how much memory the program would need. According to my calculations it would just fit.

A short time later I was the proud owner of a Vic 20, an affordable colour computer with a full keyboard and the option of extra memory and disk drives. I proceeded to add everything possible. My dream system had 27.3K free when you powered up. Total cost? Well under $1000. Probably close to $700 all told.

Commodore sold tens of thousands of Vic 20s. Later, the majority of Vic 20 owners upgraded to the new Commodore 64 which went on to sell over 10 million. In the C64's place now is the Amiga, but it's not selling as fast. After five years somewhere around three million units are now in circulation. Home computing seems to have become divided between the 100% games machines and true home computers.

No doubt the price point on the Amiga 500 we see from companies like Harvey Norman is going to lead to a greater number of unit sales. Papers in Sydney recently advertised a sale price of $699 - back to the price point of a C64 in the early days. Of course, if you want to really put an Amiga to work you'll need a monitor, external drive, extra RAM and a few hundred dollars' worth of software. MS-DOS machines are now competitive with this total price.

There are rumours this situation will improve soon, however it had better happen fast. Games consoles are attacking the Amiga market strongly from the bottom end, with big budget advertisementss running in cinemas and television. From the top end, PCs are turning up with stronger graphics capabilities and a price point that makes them attractive to those who have never experienced the pleasure of Amiga's multitasking and speed. Could the Amiga be squeezed out of the middle? Not likely, but it could suffer seriously.

How would you like to see the Amiga promoted? What features made the difference for you? We would like to hear from Amiga owners - especially those who use a different computer during the day, or own a games console which they use less. Send us a postcard or letter today with your suggestions on how to make the Amiga a more popular choice.

Andrew Farrell

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Ram Rumbles

Software prices tumble

Amidst all the discussions about exclusive licence agreements and software distribution in Australia, a number of computer retailers are now offering reduced prices on many big ticket products. The reason is they are now importing directly from the United States and bypassing the local distributors. Whilst this will mean a short-term drop in retail prices, the long-term effects remain to be seen.

It will also be interesting to see if the current import and licensing review relating to the music industry has any effects on the local software industry.

Amiga media moments

Although the Amiga seems to be rather quiet on the software front lately, a steady flow of media spottings continue to roll into our ACAR mail box. Once again, thanks to everyone who sent in a letter. We'll publish as many as space permits each issue.

Dan Parker was watching Channel 7 news on September 17th when he spotted an Amiga 2000 doing its thing. Frank Warrick, a Queensland news reader, was explaining about the 'El Nino' weather pattern which has been causing severe droughts in our countries north - the worst since the mid-1800's.

Directly behind the news commentator was an Amiga 2000 displaying satellite images of Australia as well as graphics of the globe. The computer's name was clearly visible on both the CPU and monitor. Thanks for sending in that one, Dan, have you still got your Vic 20?

Gary McSweeney, Warwick Gaetiens and Christopher Eade were all busy soaking up Channel Nine's movie *The Rachel Papers* when he spotted an Amiga 500, 1084 and 1010 external drive. On screen the Amiga showed off *BattleChess*, with assorted animations shown during the movie. Viewers also saw digitised images of girls melt from a database as the star of the movie gradually eliminated prospects. Thanks everyone for your letters.

Robert Carter was among several who spotted the Amiga in the September 17th edition of *Beyond2000*. On the subject of virtual reality a software/hardware package was demonstrating the ability to make music using virtual reality. Sounds to us like it was The Vivid Group's Mandala System, which was also demonstrated at the World of Commodore Show. Virtual reality? Yes, we've checked it out and this rates as one of the more fun applications of this new concept to date. Thanks Robert for the information.

Andrew Gormly, a regular Amiga spotter, noted the Amiga making an appearance on the *Afternoon Show* around August. The show in question appeared to feature the Amiga controlling a synth, although viewers only saw the monitor! Thanks again Andrew, and yes I have seen the Accountant ad.

Commodore Amiga 500 PC?

If you're visiting a K-Mart store during this year's Christmas holidays you could be forgiven for thinking Commodore have launched a new computer. We have seen first hand a new Amiga 500 pack which will call the Amiga 500 a PC. A survey carried out amongst moderately computer illiterate users revealed a high number expecting PC to mean IBM compatible. Within the computer industry virtually 100% of respondents expected to find an MS-DOS compatible machine behind anything called PC. Of course, we all know PC really means Personal Computer, however like other once generic names, it seems to have earned a far more specific meaning.

Another interesting rumour is news that we might be seeing new Amiga 2000 CPU's some time next year. Nobody could tell us when, but there are some interesting improvements in the pipeline. Commodore appear to have no plans to drop the A2000 as their base CPU.

TOP TEN

AMOS Compiler (Amiga):
Turn your AMOS source code into lightning fast machine code that is executable directly from the CLI or from workbench.

Cardinal of the Kremlin (Amiga):
Now Tom Clancy's thriller bursts onto your Amiga screens. Spies, scientists, negotiators and covert operators are all interlinked in this global political adventure. The fate of America is in your hands.

Vector Championship Run (Amiga):
Ever wanted to be on the starting grid with the world's Formula One professionals. Now you can in one of the most sophisticated 3-D driving games on a home computer. Reviewed in the August ACAR.

White Death (Amiga):
The Russian front in the Winter of 1942 saw one of the strategic battles of WWII. *White Death* is a totally accurate recreation of the Russian Army's strategic defeat of the German land forces. All aspects of the real battle are here; Supply lines, weather, bunkers, morale, and more.

Blitzkreig-Battle at the Ardennes (Amiga):
The ideal companion to *White Death, Blitzkreig-Battle at the Ardennes* is a realistic recreation of Hitler's last offensive of WWII. As a last resort German forces prepare for one last push through the Allied Forces. Using the same, easy to use interface as *White Death, Blitzkreig* adds V2 flying rockets as a further option.

Starblaze (Amiga):
Starblaze is 100% solid vector shoot-em-up action with a big difference - 3-D action!! There are over 100 different, intelligent attack waves, all set over 5 beautifully drawn backdrops.

Stun Runner (C-64):
Grab the controls and enter the awesome 3-D world of *Stun Runner*. Travel ahead in time to the 21st century and experience the thrill of racing at speeds of over 900 m.p.h.

Hammerfist (C-D):
In the 23rd century, the world is ruled by a powerful corporation, Centro-Holografix, that seize suitable bodies for transformation into holographic images, ready to do their bidding - Hammerfist is one such holographic image, but Hammerfist has developed a serious bug, he has retained his own mind, and must set out to undo the damage done by Centro-Holographix.

Sherman M-4
If you thought simulations were dull and boring, think again. *Sherman M-4* elegantly combines both simulations and arcade action into one seamless package. You control up to 4 Sherman M-4 tanks, which can be used as single attack pieces, or can be operated as a highly mobile attack platoon. See it to believe it!

AMOS 3-D
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- Analyze graphic equalization of real-time sound.
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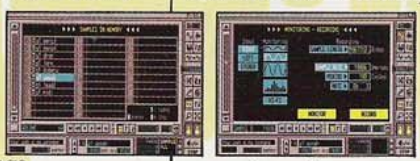
- Save your sound and music to disk or send it out via modem for replay on any Amiga.



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✓ AmigaDOS 2.0 compatible; written in assembly language.

✓ Multi-tasking operation.

✓ 68020 and 68030 compatible.

✓ Comprehensive tutorial manual helps even beginners get started right away.

✓ Intuition-based graphic interface makes operation easy.

✓ MIDI-in capability.

✓ Direct interface between sequencer and editor.

✓ Hold 32 sound samples in memory at once – all shown on screen so they are easy to manipulate.

✓ Effects and processing capabilities include echo, mix, filter, re-sample, sound data inversion, playing sounds backwards, loops, fade-in/fade-out and more.

✓ Manipulate sound samples in real time, as you listen.

✓ Create sampled instruments with 1, 3 and 8 octaves.

✓ HIFI recording for highest quality playback.

✓ Controls for faster/slower playback and filtering high frequencies during playback.

✓ Load and save samples, songs and instruments in multiple formats.

✓ Multiple effects for each note.

✓ Stereo and monophonic operation. Also convert mono to stereo or separate stereo.

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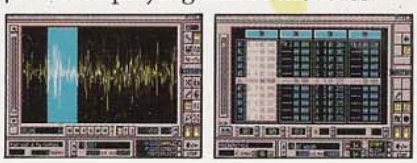

✓ Real-time oscilloscope and spectrum analysis.

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✓ Saves in IFF, SONIX or RAW formats.

✓ Compatible with SoundTracker, NoiseTracker and SoundFX modules.

DSS

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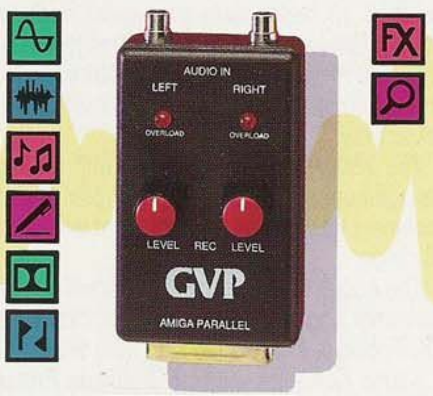

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If you're busy churning out *DesignWorks* creations, New Horizons Software wants your art. Thousands of users out there are working with *DesignWorks* and New Horizons are most interested in seeing how creative you have been. They plan to include especially good examples on the next *DesignWorks* release. Submissions should be original artwork free of any copyrights but may include a signature or credit comment. Standard Workbench fonts should be used if possible to assure that the person loading the document has the same fonts available. ❑

German Peripherals

Kaotic Koncepts are distributing the latest range of high performance peripherals for the A500 from the German manufacturer Protar.

The A500HD series offers a complete expansion solution for A500 owners, with hard drive capacities from 20 to 160 Mb and onboard RAM expansion bus, with styling to match the A500 in every detail.

High quality Seagate units are supplied as standard by Protar with superior quality Quantum units supplied on their DC (data cache) range of drives, offering 64 kb cache facility. All hard drives come pre-formatted and pre-partitioned as well as being fully auto-booting and auto-parking. All drives come with a games switch disable option which will disable the hard drive but leave that valuable RAM active for memory hungry games, while protecting your hard disk data from any corruption caused by viruses.

The high speed SCSI controller at the heart of the devices allows data transfer at the rate of around 900 Kb per second (five times the speed of an A590), with the typical mean access time for the standard drives being 24ms and 19ms for the high performance DC range. All Protar drives have a SCSI through-port for connecting other external SCSI devices. Two small LEDs indicate power and disk activity.

The A500HD comes supplied with an impressive hard drive management software package. Protar offers a full one year replacement warranty on their standard drives and two years on their DC range.

The A500HD range of hard drives will be released in Australia in November and has already been enthusiastically received in the U.K. Pricing is expected to start from $695.

Kaotic Koncepts will also distribute Protar 0.5 Meg trapdoor expansion units. These quality boards include a battery backed clock, a disable switch and come with a one year replacement warranty. They will retail at $75.

Kaotic Koncepts Pty Ltd can be contacted on Phone: (03) 879 7088 or (050) 94 6358 Fax:(03) 819 5531. ❑

Getting into 24 bit painting?

Black Belt Systems has announced a powerful new 24 bit image processing and paint program. Priced at only US$199.95, *Image Master* breaks new ground for the standard Amiga with stock 4096 colour capabilities.

Image Master opens the way to 24 bit graphics without the need for extra hardware. If you already own a graphics device, *Image Master* could be a very worthwhile addition. Image Master is sounds like *The Art Department* and *DigiPaint* rolled into one with the added bonus of 24 bit support in the paint side.

As image READER you can load 2 to 24 bit IFF, GIF, HAME, DCTV and more. The Loader format is PD so expect many others to become available. Loading is completely transparent, so there is no need to pick formats. You can also read images of any size up to 32768 by 32768 (based on memory). Likewise, you can load any number of images at one time (based on memory).

There's a direct *Digi-View* interface which reads images right from the D-V buffer.

For saving images you can write to 2 to 24 bit IFF, GIF, HAME, DCTV and more with the same loader options as before. According to BlackBelt, *Image Master* has the best 256 colour GIF rendering on the Amiga using a proprietary method. You can also write images of any size - (based on memory).

In the image processing department, *Image Master* offers over two hundred different built-in processes and more variations. True 16 million level transparency [independent R, G and B axis] is supported and every operation runs in 24 bits - no exceptions. Every operation can be applied like "paint" with many tools available.

For budding painters, *Image Master* claims to be the most powerful 24 bit paint system available for the stock Amiga. Features include any number of Prefab and custom 24-bit brushes - (based on memory); All standard fills, in 24-bits, plus new and unusual fills; All standard drawmodes, in 24-bits, plus new and unusual drawmodes; Fonts! In 24 bits, standard, color AND outline! Wet AND Dry brush techniques, auto smoothing and great palette control.

Options include punch, emboss, merge, color key, rubthru, controlled transparency, powerful scaling and reduction. The interface is easy to learn, there's lots of ARexx support, macros, scripts, tools such as PolyArcs, Rects, Ellipses, Polygons, Freehand, undo, redo and they tell us even the printer output is better than most.

It all sounds too good to be try. As soon as the full PAL version turns up we'll bring you up to date. Until then we suggest you bottle your enthusiasm or try hassling your local Amiga software supplier to land a few copies to try out. For the really keen, technical information is available by calling 0011 1 (406) 367-5509 or 0011 1 (406) 367-5513 to order. ❑

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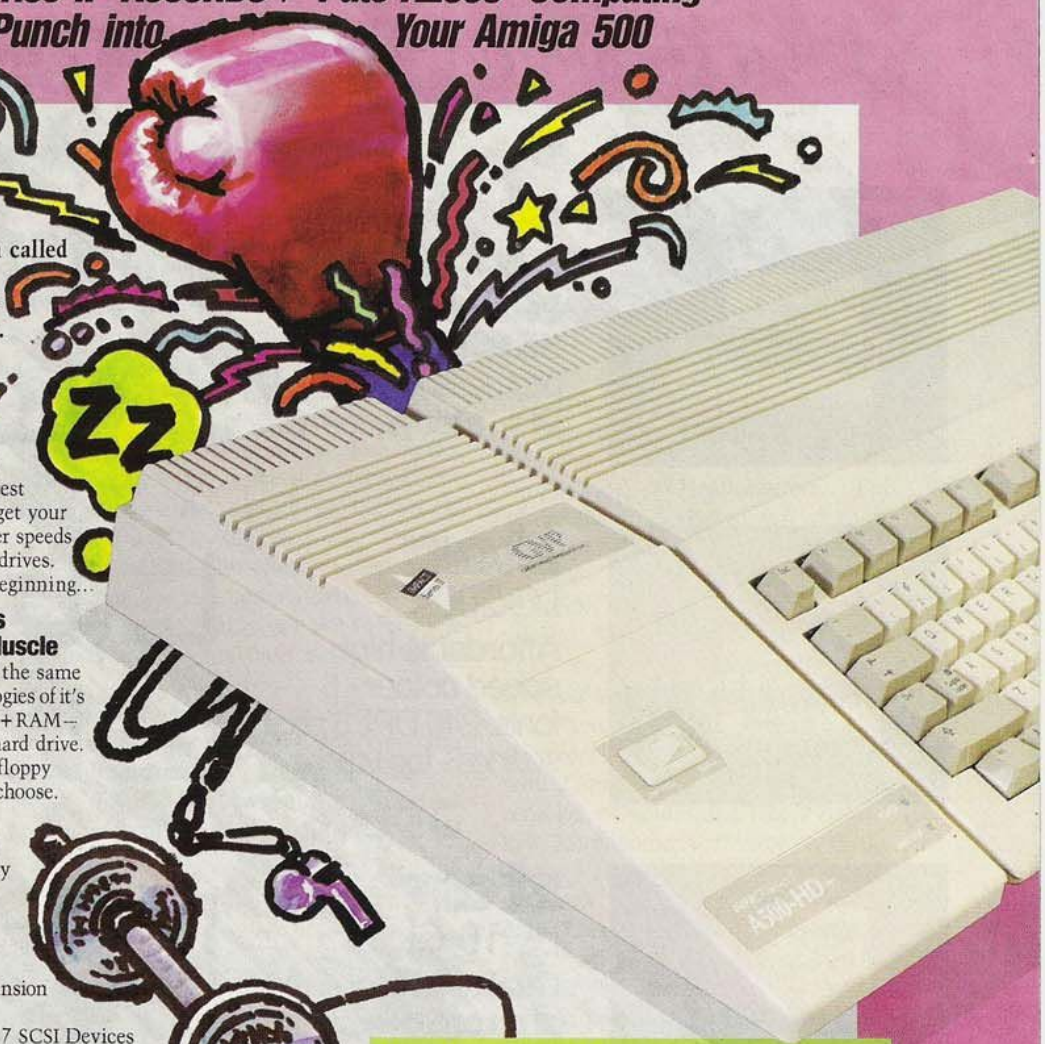

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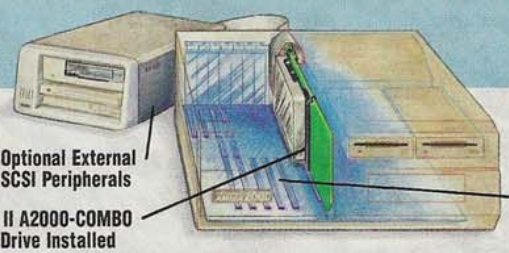

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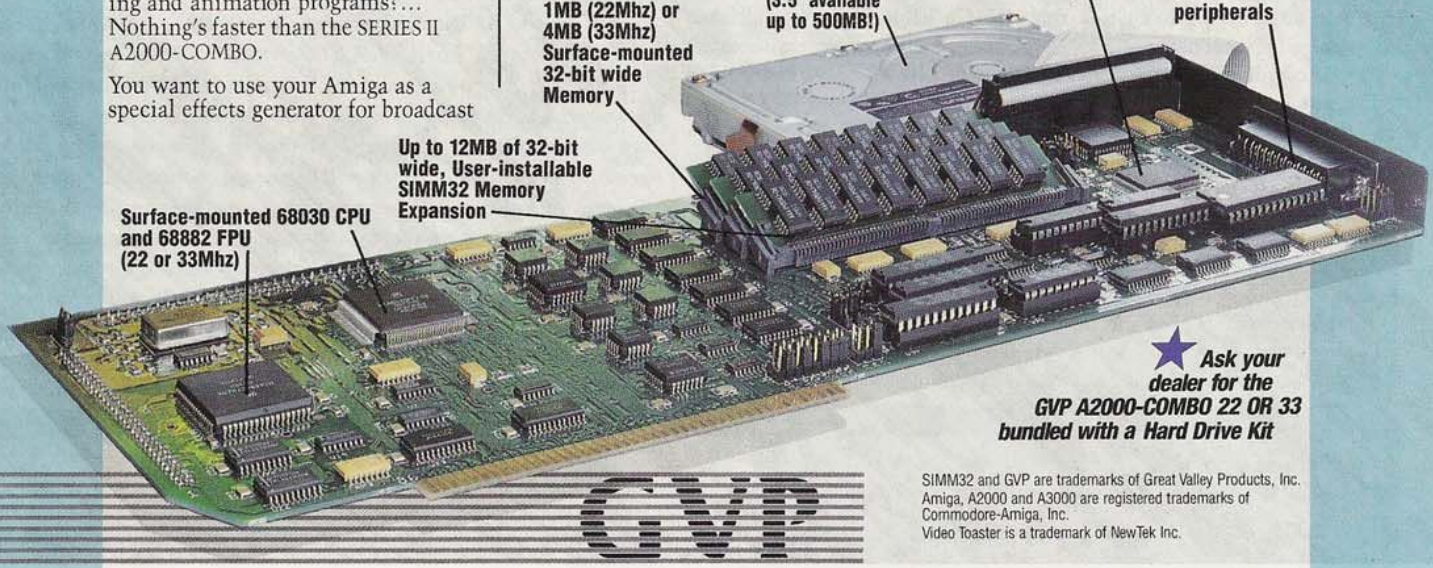

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Foundation set to make authoring easy

Impulse, the makers of *Imagine 3D* animation software and the FireCracker 24-bit Real-Time Graphics Display Card have announced a new authoring package called *Foundation*. Billed as the ultimate expert system for end-users to gain complete control over their Amiga computer system, enabling them to create applications and interactive presentations without prior programming knowledge.

Features include: Records any action with the Macro Recorder; Plays back tutorial programs that teach how to use the program; Gives on-line Help with built-in *HyperView* stack system. Business professionals can use stacks that come with *Foundation*, like the FoundDex phone/address stack, the Calendar, the MediaBase animation, sound, and picture database, and more. It's easy to modify these stacks, adding buttons that print reports, log on to teleservices, and simultaneously launch and communicate with other programs.

Not only can the entire desktop be automated with *Foundation*, but the program itself can be completely controlled, and directed to simplify daily tasks, freeing the multi-tasking Amiga for other uses.

According to Impulse you can create automated business presentations, stand-alone marketable stackware, personalised home/office organisers, and front-end screens to control laser disks, video recorders, and CD-ROM devices.

Foundation sounds like it could be THE authoring system for prototyping and creating CDTV applications. Foundation goes a step beyond *HyperCard* and *ToolBook* with True *HyperText*, where any word or phrase clicked on can navigate to text, pictures, video and external programs.

Easy-to-use programs can be created by simply adapting example stacks and objects that come with *Foundation*, or by using the English-like FAST-Talk scripting language. There's a built-in debugger and compiler, so that favourite routines can be fine-tuned and stored in libraries and tools accessible by any stack in memory.

Advanced features include: Multiple stacks in all Amiga resolutions; Full and partial-screen visual effects; Complete modification of any object, property, or script under automatic control from inside or outside the program.

Foundation comes with two freely-distributable Browsers, so that anyone with an Amiga can share and examine stacks, even without owning the program.

Foundation can also be used for Desktop Video to run a video studio, from storyboarding to scheduling, to keeping track of clients, suppliers, and new technologies. Impulse see *Foundation* as the glue that will hold a home office together, and make small businesses profitable and competitive in today's fast-moving world.

Watch for a full review soon. For more information contact Computermate on (02) 457 8388.

Workbench 2.0 and counting ...

As the version numbers tick by and the release date continues to be shunted down the track, at least we're all benefiting from the extra features and improved compatibility of the "real-soon-now" Workbench 2.something. According to latest reports, the release is nearer than ever. (How near could that be? We reckon it could happen before Christmas!)

According to rumours, Workbench 2.0 is in ROM and the enhancer kits are on their way out of the factory. The latest BETA release was a five disk set, and included several changes, including the awaited "Outline Font Technology". Commodore USA have had a few official comments to make, including this item posted on Compuserve - "As you know, to upgrade an A500 or A2000 series machine to 2.0, a 2.0 ROM Enhancer Kit is necessary. The details of the Enhancer Kit and upgrade procedures are currently being addressed. We will notify you of the details surrounding this procedure as soon as they are finalised." Sounds promising.

There was more to follow from Bill Sydnes, Commodore's VP of Engineering: "As part of Commodore's ongoing commitment to our customers, I am pleased to announce completion of Release 2.0 of the Amiga Operating System. Today's Amiga Release 2.0 is very different from the Release 2.0 first shipped with the Amiga 3000.

"Many additional man-years of effort have been invested to create a polished, stable, compatible, tested release that Commodore will build on for the future. Several hundred official beta testers provided feedback, resulting in the best tested, most trouble-free and reliable operating system for the Amiga ever.

"For existing Amiga 3000 owners, Commodore plans to release a five disk update set. For A500/A2000 owners, Commodore will make available a Release 2 Enhancer Kit, with new ROM, diskettes and full documentation. Installation will be through an Authorized Commodore Service Center. Release 2 Enhancer Kits will be available beginning in October. Pricing will be announced shortly. Following shipment of Release 2 Enhancer Kits, Commodore will gradually phase Release 2 into new unit production. Release 2 is a major step forward in software technology, and is part of Commodore's commitment to keeping the Amiga competitive, and looking to the future."

Interestingly, a short fax to local Commodore dealers stated it was time to start ordering the kits. RRP is around $99. ❑

Licenceware

Allen Computer Supplies have been appointed head distributor of *Deja Vu* Licenceware in Australia. This was formerly called *AMOS* licenceware but now the programs are not all written with *AMOS*. Allens say they were very surprised at the quality of the software, and particularly at the price, just $8 per program (one two-disk set sells at $12).

Licenceware is a relatively new idea. The way it works is that for every program sold a fee is forwarded by the distributor to the author of the program. This will hopefully encourage more quality programs to be written.

If anyone has a program they would like to put into Licenceware it can be sent to Allen Computer Supplies and they will submit it for evaluation. But it will have to be good as standards are very high. Copyright is always retained by the author. For more infomation call (03) 725 3379. ❑

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The 'V4000' system is similar to the 2 Meg. system described above, with the addition of an internally mounted board, connecting to the Gary chip, providing a further 2 MB. **Fully populated $539**

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Demo Maker

Hacking out your own demos

On any good bulletin board system or in any public domain library you'll find so-called demos. These creations are churned out during the wee small hours to show off the talents of hackers, crews of Amiga heads coding, packing and creating impressive examples of the Amigas capabilities.

They write miles of tightly organised code pumping every square micron of silicon to the max. They speak in terms of copper lists and assemblers, monitors and linkers, packers and crunchers. These guys live, breathe and eat machine code.

If this sort of lifestyle doesn't take your fancy, but the idea of knocking up a couple of your own demos does, *Demo Maker* is for you. With the click of a mouse you can pull together predefined graphics, music and sounds, tweak them as you so desire and add your own words of wisdom to the scrolling message snaking its way across the screen.

Possibilities

Let's get one thing straight here. You have control over all sorts of clever things - the hard-coding is done for you. However, you also have the option to create elements of your own. You can make your own graphics, fonts, music and if you're feeling really smart, your own vector objects. *Demo Maker* is packed with enough variation to allow plenty of possibilities. Added to this the fact that you do have some input into the action, and you have a legitimate package for creating truly unique and impressive demos. They won't be on the same scale of complexity or ingenuity as the latest Quartex concoction, but then it probably won't take you nearly as much time either.

Operation

Demo Maker's interface is not what you might expect from a high level paint package - *Demo Maker* expects you to put up with entering figures, leaving Workbench, avoiding accelerator cards and generally pretending that *Demo Maker* is the only thing happening.

The menu options are mouse activated - small consolation considering how obscure things are once you've made a selection. If you have no understanding of geometry or aren't familiar with demos in general, you'll find both the manual and program very confusing.

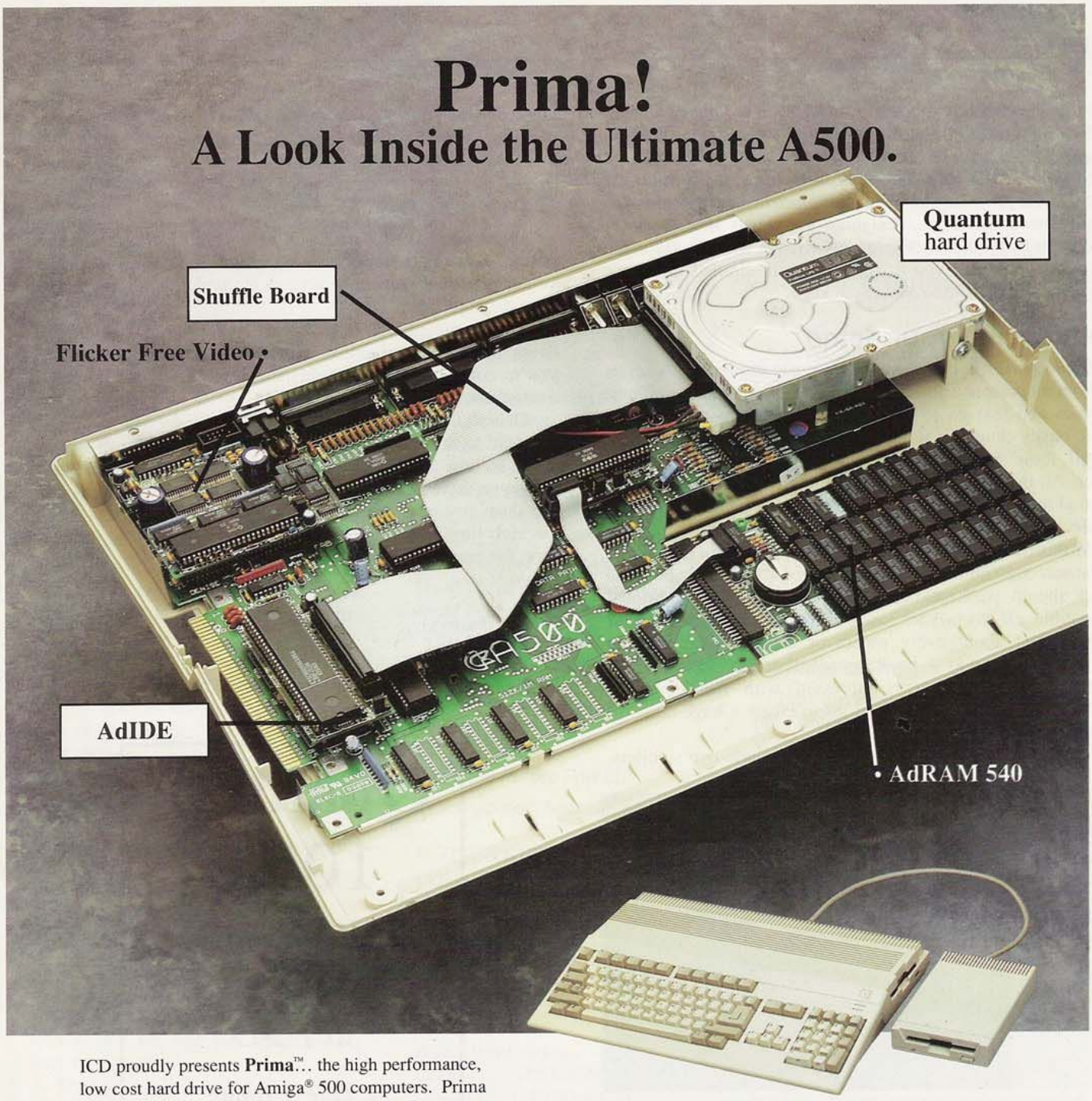
To whet the appetite, the package comes with two ready made demos and a host of parts you can combine to make your own creations. The example demos are impressive enough, especially the newest addition on the extras disk. Only a few of the available functions are used and many objects are not shown, so there is still plenty to tinker with.

There are two main screens of operation. The first is the main menu. From here you can select a couple of sub-menu screens. However, first up you use this menu to load all the components of your demo. The file requestor and menu selection are a little out of the ordinary, but they're easy enough to get the hang of.

The elements of your demo are the graphics, text and music. Graphics include vector objects, sprites, little and big logos, stars and BOB effects - no anims, or IFF brushes, although logos are brushes of a specific size.

Text actually refers to the ability of *Demo Maker* to handle fonts 8 x 8,16 x 16 or 32 x 32 pixels in size. The music function offers several song formats including *NoiseTracker*. It's easy to add

Prima!
A Look Inside the Ultimate A500.



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play modules for other popular formats such as *SoundTracker*.

Now, although all these odd formats sound rather limiting if you're more used to the tradition ANIM files, brushes and brush anims along with standard Amiga fonts, the formats are such that the program can handle graphics at a very impressive speed. The downside is, designing for *Demo Maker* can be tedious, or beyond the scope of the average user. So for some types of graphics, you'll find yourself limited to those provided with the Demo Maker package.

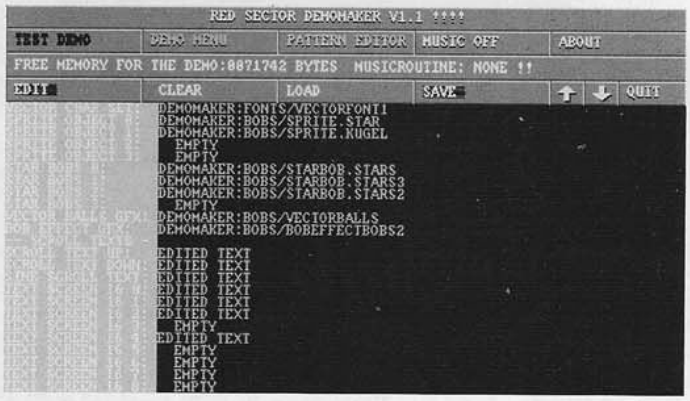
Sequencing your demo

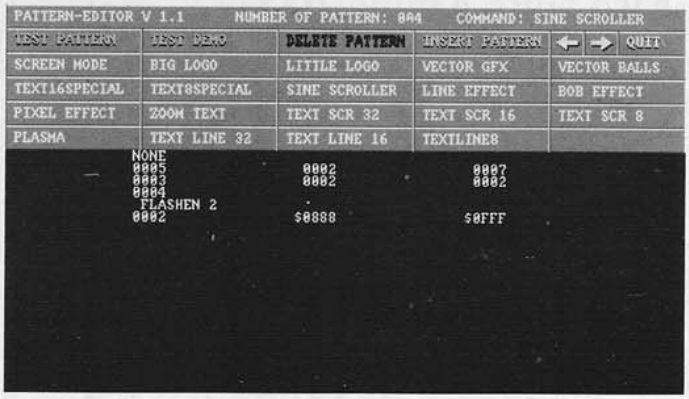
Demo Maker is like a one track music sequencer. A series of different screens containing a variety of compatible effects, graphics and text go to make up a complete demo with the music busily chugging along in the background.

All these components are assembled using the pattern editor. All the available types of demo elements are listed in a menu at the top of the screen. Adding a new patter allows you to select one of these.

At this point additional options are displayed in the middle of the screen. You can now enter numbers to signify how the effect should work and you can often activate additional compatible effects - such as a star field behind a vector graphic. Just about every aspect of each function can be altered in some way - be it speed, direction, variations or backgrounds. I was very impressed with the flexibility available. There are enough options to create a huge range of variations on any one element.

Some of *Demo Maker's* capabilities include two scrollers, large or small logos with various wipes and effects such as rotation, a variety of star fields, vector graphics and balls, bob effects and *Quix* style line effects.





Conclusion

When you have tweaked and twigged all the numbers and put the finishing touches on your graphics, *Demo Maker* lets you save a final version of your demo which is a stand alone executable program.

The documentation is technical in appearance and may be daunting to those unfamiliar with demos. Regardless of where you're coming from, experimentation is vital if you hope to unravel the intricacies of each option.

Overall, *Demo Maker* is a powerful program with the potential to churn out many unique creations. The down side is a gut feeling that this is a cheat's answer to the real thing. However, there is the educational aspect to the whole deal and the sheer joy of putting together something creative without the high time overhead. If you're into demos, but don't have time for machine code, you'll probably be very happy with *Demo Maker*. ❑

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Communications Software:

Pick of the Bunch

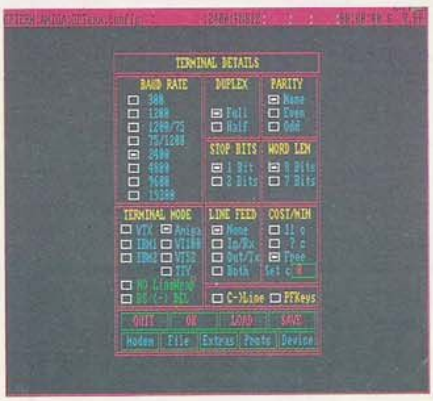
If you spend a lot of time tramping from one bulletin board to another, downloading files and posting messages, make sure you're using the right communications software. If none of that made any sense, you definitely need to read this article,
***by* Andrew Farrell.**

If you own a modem, you need a communications program. Apart from enabling you to swap programs with other modem users, you can also obtain the latest public domain offerings, chat with other Amiga users and dial into information services once you have a good terminal program.

The right package is often a personal choice. However, when it comes to raw power and ease of use, it's easy to draw comparisons with the top four programs available in Australia:

JR-Comm
GP-Term
Atalk-III
NComm 1.92

There is a vast difference in price and performance of these four packages.



GP-term

Which one is the best overall winner?

Wish list

Although I know people who own a modem and rarely use it for anything more than the occasional file transfer to a friend, most are avid users of the wondeful services provided by local Bulletin Board Systems. Invariably this means maintaining a list of up to date phone numbers, access passwords and terminal settings to make calling each board a breeze. So, our ideal program will handle this job and make finding a BBS with a free line simple by allowing several systems to be called in sequence until one answers. When connection occurs it would be nice to have some kind of audible alert that you're now connected.On line there's bound to be a fair bit of file downloading. Zmodem, the best protocol for exchanging binary files between computers, should be supported. It's the best because it's about the fastest and allows you to resume from where you left off should the transfer be interrupted.

At any time it should be obvious what the program is doing, and how much longer it will take. Altering settings must be easy and you should be able to store your favourites.

I could add a dozen more useful features like macros, a script language, full support for ANSI and IBM keyboard emulation. In fact, at least one of each of the above four programs has most of these features. Which program is it?

GP-Term 4.53

A local product, *GP-Term* is sold commercially for around $100. There is good local support and upgrades have been forthcoming. The program sports a slightly unusual interface, with some options being several windows deep. The phone book is annoying, for it must load each entry from disk. The dial window is rather bare, and I found dialing cumbersome compared to other programs. The program seems to lack many of the bells and whistles of other programs and has no script support.

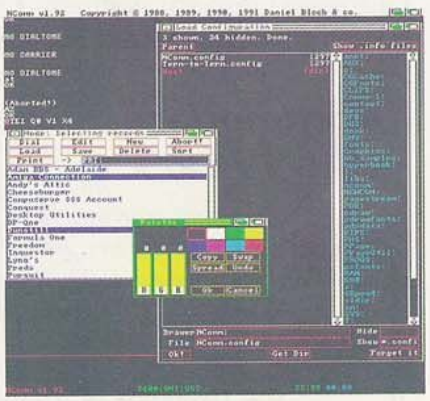
In its favour *GP-Term* handles downloads well, with comprehensive support of the Z-Modem protocol. It is also the only program which correctly works with Telecom's Discovery 40 service and also handles switching to and from Discovery 80.

GP-Term provides the best Amiga, best IBM and best VT-100 emulation, is easy to use, reasonably well documented and supported. Selecting terminal options is quick and simple. Rumour has it that a major upgrade is in the works - I can't wait to see the next version.

Atalk-III 1.0

A fast, organised approach to menus and options makes *Atalk-III* a pleasure to use.

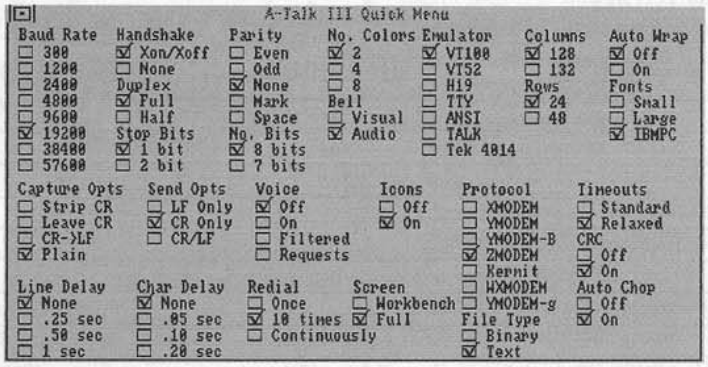
A handy Quick menu provides most often selected options on a single intuition gadget based window. The phone book and dialling is smooth, with plenty of room for configuring each number individually. The documention is outstanding, with in depth coverage of all aspects of communications. *Atalk-III* is especially well equipped to handle speaking with main-frames.On the down side there is a distinct lack of PAL support, clumsy multi-file selection for batch file transfers and a lack of low



Ncomm

Communication Software Comparison Chart

	GP-Term	Atalk III	JR-Comm	NComm
Custom Screen	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Workbench Screen	-	Yes	Yes	Yes
PAL Support	Yes	-	Yes	Yes
Overscan	-	-	-	Yes
Interlaced	Yes	Tektronics Mode	-	Yes
Max Colours	16	8	16	16
Fonts - Large	Fonts - Large	Fonts - Large	Fonts - Large	Fonts - Large
Fonts - Local	Fonts - Local	Fonts - Local	Fonts - Local	Fonts - Local
Fonts - IBM	Fonts - IBM	Fonts - IBM	Fonts - IBM	Fonts - IBM
Max Columns	132	132	80	80
Phone Book	Unlimited	60	9999	Unlimited
Macro Keys	20	20	40	20
Script	-	Yes	-	Yes
AREXX	-	Yes	-	-
Scrollback Buffer	-	Yes	Yes	Yes
Cut and Paste	-	Yes	-	Yes
ANSI Mouse	-			Yes
ANSI Filter	ANSI Filter	ANSI Filter	ANSI Filter	ANSI Filter
Capture ASCII	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Send	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Search	-	-	-	Yes
XModem	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
XModem-CRC	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
WXModem	XModem	XModem	XModem	XModem
YModem	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Ymodem-Batch	Yes	-	-	Yes
Ymodem-G	-	Yes	Yes	Yes
Zmodem	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
CIS B	-	-	-	-
CIS B+	-	-	Yes	-
CIS QuickB	-	-	-	XPR included
Kermit	Yes	Yes	-	Yes
SADIE	-	-	-	-
XPR Library	-	Yes	-	Yes
VT-52	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
VT-100	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
VT-102	Yes	-	-	-
ANSI	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
H19	-	Yes	-	-
Tek4010	-	Yes	-	-
Tek4014	-	Yes	-	-
SkyPix	-	-	Yes	-
Max Baud Rate	19,200	57,600	57,600	115,200
MIDI Support	MIDI Support	MIDI Support	MIDI Support	MIDI Support
Multiple Serial	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Logging	-	-	Yes	Yes
Costing	Yes	-	Yes	External
Timer	Yes	Manual	Yes	Yes
Price	$99	around $100	US $35	Donation



Atalk

level control over modem settings.

On the other hand the script language is strong, and there is a handy learn mode for automatically creating logon scripts. There's even a simple BBS host script for remote access to your machine.

Other strong points include the AREXX support, variety of screen options and overall speed. The worst point is the price, at around $150.

JR-Comm 1.02A

Despite the fact this is often touted as public domain software, *JR-Comm* is as commercial as they come. It falls into a category known as Shareware - software which may be freely dsitributed, but to legally use it you must send money to the author directly. In return you receive a fully operational version which in *JR-Comms* case removes an otherwise annoying delay screen. This sounds good except the author lives in America, so finding local support may not be easy. Worse still is trying to deal with problems when money sent doesn't result in a registered version being forthcoming.

With all that aside, *JR-Comm* remains a favourite of many regular telecomputing users. It sports a smart interface, plenty of low - level configurability, and a well thought out interface for most aspects of the program's operation - including the phone book, terminal settings and default program settings.

All this power can be a bit much for the beginner. Also, the documention is a bit heavy and there's nothing in the way of script support - although an update with this and other features such as AREXX and XPR's is expected soon. Good emulation of ANSI graphics and PC keyboard, excellent levels of program control and strong availability make *JR-Comm* a popular choice.

NComm 1.92

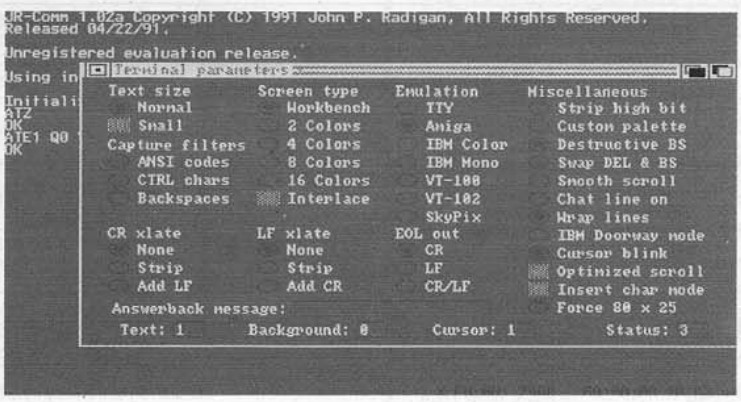
Unlike all the other programs mentioned, *NComm* is truly brilliant value for money. It's free. Well, it's as free as you make it. The authors encourage you to send them whatever you think the program is worth, if you want. So all you're likely to pay is the cost of downloading from your local BBS, or the price of a disk from a nearby user group of PD supplier.

NComm is a prize example of how all good software should be written. It is internally multitasking - so while you're waiting for a download you can edit the phone book or review the capture buffer. *NComm* has the most powerful script language I've ever seen on any Amiga terminal program. It's so good, that *Ncomm* includes a host mode script which is more like a mini-BBS, complete with message and file areas, user security, bulletin areas and more.

There is good support for XPR's - external procotol libraries for protocols not supported when you first obtain *Ncomm*. I often use QuickB, a protocol especially for use on Compuserve. *Atalk* also supports this option, but *Ncomm* handles it better.

The phone book is fairly good - what is great is the quick dial pull down menu. Every phone number can have its own configuration - with common configs able to be shared between numbers. There is good hanlding of macros but sadly no AREXX support.

The documentation is well written, and *NComm* offers plenty of control over all aspects of operation. Ease of use, plenty of power and typical Amiga type menus coupled with a sensible approach to organising all the available functions has made NComm my choice for best communications program. ❑



jr-comm

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from GP-Software
(07) 366 1402

ATalk-III
from Computermate
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JR-Comm & NComm
Any public domain supplier, user group or BBS.

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G'DAYS

To Kevin Nugent who just happened to write the best letter to the editor I've seen for an age, (October ACAR entitled "Do those retailers really know?") I mean, none of use are perfect but that is ridiculous.

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Sound samping on a budget doesn't have to mean you sacrifice the quality, as *George Kimpton* writes ...

Audio Engineer Junior

We are all guilty of shopping around for a bargain - especially in these difficult times. There is also the school of thought that says "you only get what you pay for" or cheapies are roughies. Invariably computer hardware or software is no exception when it comes to parting with that hard earned cash.

Of course, there are exceptions. This is one. Priced at $189, *Audio Engineer Junior* is excellent value for money and it performs like a real winner.

As in the original *Audio Engineer Plus*, this is a class product, produced locally, without all the knobs and switches of the original. It operates only in mono mode for sampling, but judicious manipulation of the resulting two channel digitised recording produces a credible sounding stereo type output.

The package is also much smaller than the original - slightly larger than *Digi-View* - with a 25 pin conector which plugs into your Amiga's parallel port. An RCA connector or a microphone jack is available for audio input.

One thought I would offer manufacturers here. There are a number of pieces of hardware like this, such as *Digi-View* and Commodore's Modulator to name but two, which are intended to hang off the multi-pin connectors at the back of Amiga without support.

As one who has had to fix broken printed circuit board connections in the past, it would be nice if these units could be supplied with flexible cables or at least the means to be screwed on to the connector for support.

The software supplied with *Junior* would appear to be the same as that supplied for *Audio Engineer Plus*. A quick look through the ReadMe files suggests an upgrade with references to Accelerator Boards and Multi-Sync monitors which I don't think were around when *Plus* first came on the scene. Incidentally RamScan has been offering to upgrade early software versions of *Plus* for a nominal charge recently.

The specifications say it is possible to sample up to a rate of 100,000 samples/sec but the software limits you to 56,000 and you are warned that an accelerator is desireable for rates in excess of 38,000.

State of the Art

Audio Engineer Junior uses state of the art eight bit sampling for translating the incoming signal to digital format. I have heard many audiophiles complain the limitation of eight bit sampling is not good enough but I would defy them to tell the difference just by listening and that is what counts for us average users. What do the statistics matter if you can't hear it - and to me this package sure sound great.

Input level adjustment is automatic but a manual override is provided. Electronic level control (AGC) and Self Centralizing Bias circuitry optimizes the bias and level settings for maximum dynamic range of the A/D converter.

Goodies

All the goodies we have come to expect from *Audio Engineer Plus* are there with real time echos, delays, flange effects, mixing, reverse and positive waveform manipulation, ramping up and down, inversion of the waveform, loops and many others.

In fact the only differences I could find between father and son are the absence in the *Junior* version of stereo sampling, the printer feed through and the knobs and switches. Apart from that there is no obvious difference except the cost and the improved electronic circuitry stashed away inside. One can certainly say 'good things come in little packages'. ❑

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Improving your Amiga

A general guide to vital enhancements

by Andrew Farrell

You're up and running. Workbench is starting to make sense and you've got yourself a couple of solid application programs. Now, here's what you need to know to turn your system into a sleek, organised tool for productivity and enjoyment.

Getting your Amiga working for you involves more than simply understanding how to launch a program, load a file or boot a game. Inevitably the time will come when you will need to carry out some housekeeping, organise your files, or alter the way your system works.

Many others have blazed the trail before you, so after five years of Amiga hacks plugging away at the operating system, there are many very useful programs for making your Amiga a tidier, more useful computer. These are available as both commercial and public domain programs.

It's amazing how many Amiga owners have never read the Workbench manual. I have a friend who thought Workbench was just a fun thing to play around on. However, after working through the Workbench manual, the light dawned, and now the very same guy has upgraded his system to include an accelerator and hard drive. The step that made the difference was understanding the power of the Amiga's operating system as a tool for organising yourself, your business and for having fun.

Over the years I have found a number of things I have done to make using my Amiga more pleasurable and these include installing a number of programs to help me along the way.

Why use Workbench anyway?

Although the temptation is there to stick to booting disks all your life, you will be missing out on some of the Amiga's greatest features - Multitasking. By having several programs running at one time, you'll find you can place useful information at your finger tips. Although your current system might be somewhat limited in size, the sorts of programs you might find beneficial don't take up a lot of memory.

From Workbench 1.3 you can customise your work environment. Create your own pointer, change the screen colours, set up a printer to respond correctly to productivity software or adjust the way your mouse works.

Workbench 2.0 is just around the corner. It's a far smarter, more powerful work environment. If you still haven't ventured into familiarising yourself with the power of the operating system, take the time to do so. Then, continue reading.

Space is essential

Regardless of how much space you have - be it RAM or disk storage - there never seems to be enough. So, one of the first things worth adding to your Workbench to make it faster, create some more room and to provide you with a number of worthwhile improvements is called the AmigaDOS Replacement Project. This is a public domain release of a special third party project which resulted in an upgrade to the Amiga's operating system. Unfortunately ARP, as it is often called, didn't make it into Workbench 1.3.

You can obtain ARP from user groups, BBS's and suppliers of public domain software. It's very easy to install and has many useful benefits. If you ever plan on using the CLI, ARP adds the familiar *.* wild cards to the CLI commands. These same CLI commands are replaced by ARP with machine code versions which are faster and smaller than the official release. ARP is a must have, it's a cheap worthwhile improvement.

ARP will also install a library onto your Workbench called arp.library. This file is needed by many public domain and some commercial programs. It provides a standard file requestor and assorted other functions, saving space and making program interfaces more consistent.

If you only have 512K of RAM and a single drive, the next best addition you can make is to purchase extra RAM and an extra drive. Being a disk based operating system, the Amiga works far more smoothly with the help of an external disk drive. Many programs require 1 Megabyte of RAM. Even if they don't, the extra memory will provide vital additional workspace. External drives sell for under $200 and an extra 512K will cost under $100. Both can easily be installed and are pretty well essential if you plan on using your Amiga for anything apart from games.

Power tools

Every day I view graphics, read text files, copy files, delete files, format a disk or tidy my hard drive using a utility program called *Directory OPUS*. This program is a first class product which would put similar products in the MS-DOS world to shame. On the Amiga, there are other programs which perform similar tasks, however I have seen none which offer the degree of flexibility, ease of use and power of *Directory OPUS*.

A directory utility like *OPUS* offers the ability to do all the above and more using the mouse. It give you the power you could normally only achieve by using the CLI. *OPUS* is handy for running programs, listening to music, sounds,

viewing all types of IFF files and you can even set it to play animations or run other programs.

The best part about these kinds of programs is that they allow you to see both where you want to copy a file from and where you want it to move to. A split screen shows the contents of each disk or drawer (also called a directory). You can easily see the size of a file, attach a note describing the file's contents, see when the file was created and many other useful functions. Space does not allow a full description of what else these kinds of programs let you do. However, I thoroughly recommend you invest in one. If you can't afford a commercial program like *OPUS*, there are cheaper public domain utilities available.

Pop up information

So, now you've got the power to organise your computer, how about a few tools to organise you? There are several programs around which will make your Workbench a true replacement for your old desk. Personal organisers such as *Nag* or *Who!What!When!&Where!* are ideal for people whose life revolves around appointments. These programs help you keep track of where you should be and who you should call. They remind you automatically - and in a fun way too. *Nag* can flash your screen, play a beep, digitised sound or speak to you using the Amiga's software based voice synthesiser. *Contact* is my favourite organiser. It doesn't handle appointments or task management, but it is one of the best contact managers you'll find.

Using *Contact* you can store the telephone numbers and addresses of everyone you're in contact with. If you have a modem, the program will even dial the phone number for you when you want to call someone.

There's also room to add notes about people. You can print address labels for people who have something in common and the best part is *Contact* will pop up onto any Amiga screen - from your favourite paint program to a desktop publishing package. On the *Contact* disk you'll also find a calculator with the same ability to turn up wherever you want it. These two tools are probably the most popped up programs on the Amiga in our office.

Wrapping it up

There's a lot more to know about your Amiga for it run smoothly all the time. There are many user groups around with knowledgable people able to help when you get stuck. There are also a number of consultants available to help those who need someone to sort things out for a price. Regular *Commodore Review* contributor, George Kimpton, is now making house calls. You can reach him on (02) 634 5995. For Queensland readers, Greg Perry also offers help to Amiga owners at an hourly rate. You can reach him on (07) 366 1402. In coming issues we plan to list others who provide a similar service. If you are available as an Amiga consultant, please drop us a line.

Glossary

Accelerator

A plug in card which replaces the standard 68000 Central Processor Unit in your Amiga with a faster compatible chip such as the 68010,20,30 or 40. Think of it as a faster brain for your Amiga.BOOT

Putting in a disk which will satisfy the prompt to insert Workbench when you first switch on your Amiga is called booting your machine. You can re-boot by holding down the keys CTRL and the left and right Amiga keys.

CLI

Command Line Interface; from here you can enter commands directly to AmigaDOS. It's more complex than Workbench, but offers you much more low level power.

Digitised

Taking an analogue signal such as a sound and turning it into digits - ones and zeros - to represent the changes in modulation. This enables things like video images and music to be stored digitally on computer.

Directory

Same as a Drawer on Workbench - a directory is the term used when you're in the CLI or a DOS utility.

Format A Disk

A new floppy disk is like a new car park - it's ready for use, but it needs to have the lines marked in so everyone will know where to park. Formatting a disk prepares it to store information. Different types of computers use different formats even though the disks are initially the same.

Hard Drive

A fixed disk inside a special housing which spins at high speed and is more densly packed with information than a floppy disk, making it much faster for accessing data.

IFF

A standard format for storing different types of information like graphics and sounds devised by Electronic Arts and supported by the vast majority of Amiga products.

LOAD

When you double-click on a program it is first loaded into the computer's memory where it is then executed. This is sometimes called LOADing the program.

Multitasking

The ability to execute several programs at one time. Limited by available memory.

MS-DOS

MicroSoft Disk Operating System - Instead of AmigaDOS, IBM compatible personal computers use MS-DOS. The Amiga can be made to read, write and format MS-DOS disks very easily.

Public Domain

A program placed in the public domain is free of any copyright. It may be freely distributed. ❑

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No 4

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FindWordS Construction Set

by George Kimpton

Word puzzle devotees will have a ball with this program. Just as *Brainscrambler*, recently reviewed in this magazine, allows you to make your own jig-saw puzzles, *FindWordS* allows you to create word puzzles tuned to your own special interests.

FindWordS is that type of puzzle you often see in the papers or magazines where you are confronted with a square box filled with a profusion of jumbled letters in which you are expected to recognise familiar words. The difference is this time you get to choose the words that are buried in the profusion.

This is the first in a proposed range of educational programs produced by MVP (Mickey & Vince Productions). Others hopefully will include: *CrossWordS, MarkBooK, Memory-SquareS, Fight'n WordS, HyperFinD* (interactive storybook journeys), *TalkWordS* and a number of others.

These programs were originally intended for use by students, but the authors realised that this was not really practical as there was a dearth of Amigas available for hands on use by students in schools.

Anyway, the programs are now slanted towards teachers who can use them to produce entertaining and educational teaching resource materials. This is not to say that students will not find them useful and entertaining.

The idea with *FindWordS* is to produce word puzzles using theme word lists associated with the subject being studied. These can then be printed out for distribution to the class.

The program is well thought out and very easy to use. You make up your own theme list of words on any subject and the computer inserts the words in a box of from 2 to 40 characters by 30 on a best fit basis. The words are hidden in a camouflage of randomly produced characters and can be horizontal, vertical or diagonal and even backwards.

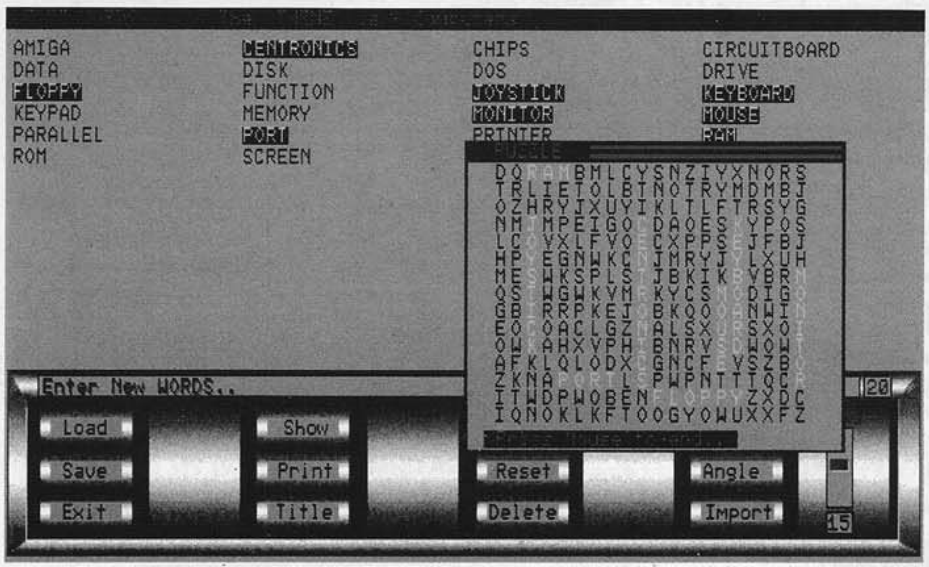
It is possible to view the word placement using a SHOW command and you are then allowed to edit both the word list or the puzzle if you are not satisfied. The printout contains the puzzle and a list of the words the students should find. System requirements are 512k minimum, 1 Meg preferred.

The manual is produced using an Amiga and *Pagestream* and is very well produced for two new chums. It is concise and easy to follow.

This program is really a tribute to the determination of two people (Mickey and Vince) who refuse to be, in the vernacular, "dole bludgers".

Just how keen they are is best illustrated by the fact that Vince is forced to operate his Amiga from batteries. They saw a need for educational software in local schools up Kempsey way and decided to use their Amigas to benefit the community and hopefully create a source of income for themselves.

Initiative like this deserves to be encouraged and they are seeking to make contact with others like themselves and of course anyone who will help them market this and future programs. Call Vince (065) 668 105 or Colin (Mickey) (065) 660 253 for copies of the program ($69) or just a chat about it. ❑



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C - 64 Elementary school grade builder 3 pack

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Britannica Software's Three Pack consists of* Math Maze, Spellicopter *and* Designasaurus. *Combined, they are designed to build grades in Science, Math and Spelling.

by Owen James

Math Maze

Math Maze is a simple game in which you must guide a fly through a maze, passing over the correct numbers in response to a mathematical question. The faster you answer, the more points you get. Advanced levels are available which see the introduction of a hungry spider to keep you up to speed, and invisible maze walls.

You can select what area you'd like to cover (addition, multiplication, subtraction or division) and specify the degree of difficulty. If you get bored with the supplied mazes, you can create your own with limited fuss.

'Mental Math' is an area of the program which tests your mental arithmetic skills. Questions are asked and you must enter the correct answer before the time runs out. Again, you can select the area you'd like to cover and the degree of difficulty.

Designasaurus

Designasaurus is the real gem of the package. It's educational, innovative and entertaining; how all good education software should be. Lots of colours, music and animation keep it constantly interesting.

There are three main parts to *Designasaurus* - Create a Dinosaur, Walk a Dinosaur and Print a Dinosaur.

You begin creating a dinosaur as a paleontologist in the Museum of Natural History. Beside you are four drawers marked Head, Neck, Body and Tail. Using the joystick you select which drawer to open.

Each drawer contains a series of 'card files'. These cards show a picture of the selected fossil part, name, age, class, order, family and some general information. You can flip through all of them before you make a decision on which one to add to your model. This lets you add and change dinosaur parts just like a stone-aged Dr. Frankenstein!

Once you're satisfied with your creation you can opt to analyze and print it. The analysis will give you information on the various parts your dinosaur is made up of. My dinosaur was part herbivore and part carnivore. The analysis told me it would have trouble deciding what to eat!

You can name your dinosaur before printing. Printing is very simple and straightforward with very few parameters to set before printing. You can select between a Commodore compatible or Epsom compatible printer and have the option of changing print size. The manual says that iron-on transfer paper is included in the pack, though it wasn't included with the review copy.

'Walk A Dinosaur' puts you in control of a dinosaur as it travels through five different ecosystems. You can select from a Brontosaurus, Tyrannosaurus or a Stegosaurus. Survival of your dinosaur is important, so you must avoid predators and remember to eat along the way.

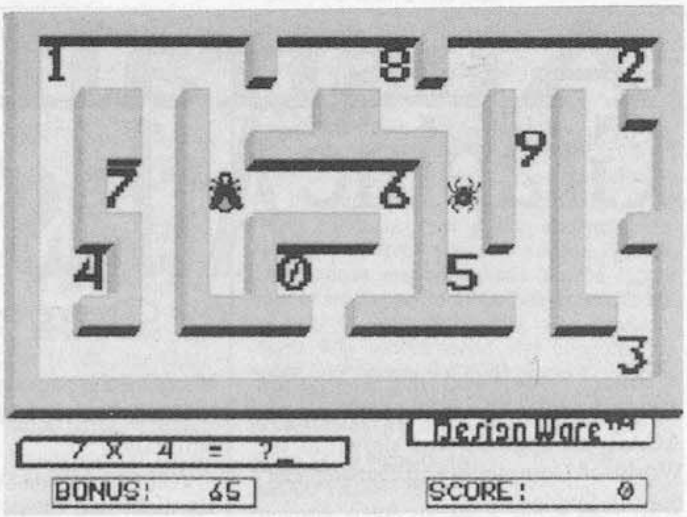
The top of the screen displays a number of graphs to give you information about how many carnivores, herbivores and how much vegetation is available in your current ecosystem. It also gives an indication of how many calories your dinosaur has so that you know when to eat. And like in real life, your actions have an effect on the total ecosystem. Eat too much in a particular ecosystem and you'll upset the natural balance and find yourself short on food later. Once you've completed all five ecosystems, *Designasaurus* will award you with a Diploma.

'Print a Dinosaur' is the last option. You can select from 12 different dinosaurs to either print or display. Print-outs vary in size from small right up to poster size. Information about your chosen dinosaur will also be printed underneath the picture. The dinosaurs are very well drawn and even include some scenery. Great for school projects or dinosaur lovers in general.

The Grade builder three pack is a worthwhile education package even with the two older titles. Suitable for any Primary school student. ❑

gram that is designed to induce thought rather than just recalling memorized answers to simple problems. This involves giving questions with more than one part, which the manual refers as regrouping or carrying. The answers must be calculated in the child's mind.

The unfortunate thing with *Math Maze* is that since its release in 1983, it has become very outdated. Compared with the programs of today, *Math Maze's* graphics and sound are poor, and the actual time to get the program up and running is quite astonishingly long. It's not simple to begin, either. There are so many selections which must be made that a parent would need more than a few spare moments to set it up for junior. Operation is simple once it finally gets up and running since the joystick is used for most functions. Recommended age group: Six to Eleven. ❑



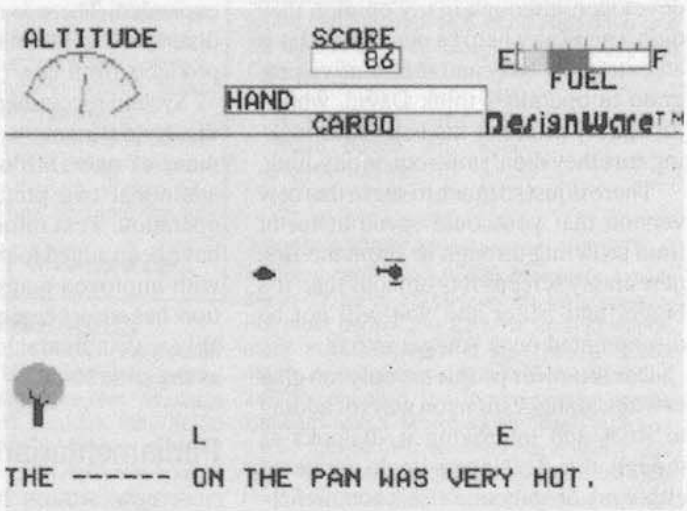
Spellicopter

Spellicopter is another of DesignWare's older titles, and again suffers in the graphics and sound department. This time the aim of the game is to manoeuvre a helicopter to pick up letters in sequence to spell a word. To make your job more difficult, obstacles have been added such as air balloons, clouds and a UFO intent on making close contact.

Three levels are available for both helicopter control and word difficulty. A total of 400 spelling words are included on disk, and you can add to words of your own. This would be useful for children to enter their own word lists from school and use those instead of the supplied lists.

You are presented with a context sentence, and must fill in the blank by making the required word out of the letters scattered on the ground. You can drop and pick up letters at will, a good thing since the letters must be picked up in the correct order. Once complete you must manoeuvre your craft back to base, again avoiding mid-air obstacles. A time limit is given in the form of a decreasing fuel level.

Like *Math Maze*, *Spellicopter* suffers from age. The graphics and sound remind me very much of the early days of Lode Runner - small graphics, little use of colour and only a periodic 'beep' or 'plonk' for sound effects. In its day I'm sure *Spellicopter* was considered a good program. Now, however, I think users have come to expect more from their software than just an Apple IIe or early IBM conversion. Still, the programs would entertain and educate the young for a while at least. Recommended age group: Six to Adult. ❑



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Australian Graphic Atlas 3

by George Kimpton

Since I reviewed the *Australian Graphic Atlas v1.0* in the July issue of ACAR, an upgrade was shown at the World of Commodore at Darling Harbour in Sydney.

It was very popular and every time I looked someone was working through it with the help of David McCandless, its developer, although in my opinion they didn't need any help as once loaded it is an extremely easy and informative program to operate. I think David, who is justifiably proud of his baby, was making sure they didn't miss out on anything.

There is just so much to see in this new version that you could spend at lot of time prowling through it. From the first new classy screens it is obvious that it's bigger and better and you will not be disappointed once you get into it.

David and his people are only too glad to listen to suggestions on ways of adding to *AGA* and improving it. It looks as though the developers took notice of either my or someone else's comments - the slide transitions are now very smooth in the slide shows and some niggling bugs have been cleared up.

The handbook has also been expanded with more information on the program contents and operation, but is still very light on. To be fair though it is really adequate, as once installed operation of this program could not be easier, it is very user friendly. With the wealth of information now included I suspect the only way to improve it will be via the CDTV, which I am informed is already being looked into.

One point of interest though, the review copy at first failed to perform and investigation showed that all the disks had several corrupt tracks. I have been informed that this is due to Australia Post X-raying the packages despite pleas not to do so. The replacement disks worked perfectly.

Version 3.0 has swelled from three to six disks and most, if not all, sections have been completely revamped. There is considerable additional data in all sections, and the format of some being expanded. There is also a new installer disk which will be used to install all new products from now on.

System recommendations are for two drives (definitely a must) and a minimum of one 1Mb of memory with an additional two preferred for smoother operation. Text information and photos have been added to the explorers section with improved maps. The wildlife section has also been expanded considerably with individual information as well as the slide show.

Parliamentarians

A new section has been added to include information on our parliamentarians. Heaven only knows how often this will need updating. Any data generally can be displayed by state or Australia wide depending on choice or as individual slides.

Future modules for *AGA* include Demographics, Australian History, Industry, extensions of Animals, Birds, Mammals etc, Flora, Honours, Medals, Emblems, Antarctica and Australia's offshore Territories, New Zealand, Indonesia, Malaysia and the Pacific Islands. Quite an ambitious program that needs encouraging.

When all these additional modules become available this will become a great reference source if the present standard is maintained, and I am sure it will given the obvious enthusiasm of David and his fellow developers. The other point to consider is that being a home grown Australian product it is more likely to have the information needed in schools than an overseas version. Just imagine what the proposed Federal Parliament series would be like if it was produced overseas, the mind boggles at what might be included.

One thing is for sure, it is still best installed on a hard disk, as floppy installation is around five minutes on my 2500 (*AmigaVision* already installed) and depending on the subject chosen there is still the additional disk swapping and loading time. Hard disk installation makes these delays negligible and operation is almost instantaneous. The additional modules will, I suspect, make hard disk installation mandatory.

Journey through a Cell

HC Software are also just about to release another educational package called *Journey Through A Cell* which, judging by the advance copy I have just looked at, will be a very useful resource for biology students. The commitment of the developers to detail - and excellent artwork - makes all this software a very useful educational tool.

To my mind there are two very important factors in this software. One is the ability to print out the slides for use and study. The other is the ability of the user to modify and update the data to suit their own needs - because of the *AmigaVision* format. It is possible for the user to create and add their own modules as the need arises.

Apart from the educational side there is also an Australian postcode package with two disks. It can operate as a stand alone product and makes it virtually impossible to not find a post code even if you are not sure how to spell the name.

HC Software are to be commended for their commitment to top quality educational software and good value. ❑

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Amiga Hints & Tips for beginners

The Amiga is a complex and powerful machine which is quickly closing the gap between the home computer and a business machine. But with its ever increasing power and continued development, it is also becoming increasingly difficult for a beginner to come to grips with its complexities.

During the course of this article, I will take a stab at explaining various aspects of the Amiga and its DOS operating system and try to clear up some of the more common problems that a newcomer to the machine might have.

As soon as you tire of using the Amiga's workbench setup and decide to delve further into the guts of what the Amiga can do, you will find yourself turning to the Amiga's CLI (or SHELL in 1.3). The Amiga's Command Line Interface gives you access to all of the files and commands which you simply can't see or take advantage of when working in Workbench.

You need a way of manipulating those files and commands to take advantage of setting up the Amiga to do what you want it to do, so Commodore supplied everyone with a simple text editor which lives "C" directory of your Workbench disk. His name is Ed and you call him from the CLI simply by typing his name. Alternatively "Ed Any_File" will start Ed with the text file you wish to edit already loaded.

A handy little Ed

Probably the most common use for Ed would be rearranging the startup sequence of your boot disk. Creating various batch files is another common use. But a lot of people get put off (quite rightly) from using Ed because of its many commands, all of which must be accessed through various combinations of keyboard strokes.

The mouse is not active when working with Ed, so there are no pull down menus with which to select commands. Here is a rather obvious, but not so commonly used method of jolting one's memory when working with Ed; or for that matter, any text editor which has keyboard input for commands.

Commands

Ed uses two types of commands, so you first must decide which type of command works better for you. Briefly, the two types are "Direct Commands" and "Command Mode Commands". Direct commands execute immediately the appropriate key combination is pressed while Command Mode commands consist of pressing the Escape key first and then the key which corresponds to the command you want executed followed by the return key. You can tell when you are in Command Mode by an asterisk which appears in the lower left corner of the editor's screen.

Once you've decided which style you're going to use, get hold of a couple of plain ruled stock cards available at just about any newsagency. On one of these cards, jot down the key sequences which you will need to execute the most commonly used commands when working with the editor. You can find all of these in the back of the user's manual (for want of a more suitable and printable term for it) which you should have got with your Amiga.

Having done this, fold the card in half; or if you've used the whole card, stick one to the back of it with a bit of tape on top so that it can free stand. Keep this reference card in a handy and easily accessible place so that when you use Ed, all you need do is sit it on top or beside your computer where it will serve to jolt your memory at a glance. Simple, but effective!

Options in Ed

As I said before, Ed is not the best choice one could make for a text editor. There are many excellent editors available for the Amiga which will cost you virtually nothing. I am of course talking about the public domain.

Prime Artifax have a theme disk which I put together devoted to text editors and of the many available on it, one goes by the name of *Qed*.

Qed is a shareware (try before you buy) text editor which was programmed by a chap named Darren M. Greenwald in America who is continually updating and improving the editor to suit requests from registered users. It's a totally different and considerably more powerful beast compared to Ed and is far more user friendly.

Nearly all of its features are accessible via the mouse and menu method which is far more easier to use. Keyboard equivalents can also be used for those that prefer to work this way and it has the capability to take advantage of AREXX macros, which serves to make it a totally user configurable editor. Note that you would need to become a registered user to take advantage of this capability.

I can highly recommend you try this editor as I am a heavy user of it myself. I use *Qed* for all my text editing as well as for most of my word processing needs. As a matter of fact, this article along with all of my others was produced using *Qed*.

Briefly, some of *Qed's* capabilities include: an extremely fast search and replace function, automatic back up of files, overstrike and wordwrap mode, text formatting, hard and soft tabs, block and document editing, printing capabilities and many other features too numerous to mention here.

Probably the best feature of *Qed* in my opinion is its ease of use and excellent documentation written by the author. Being able to use the mouse to position the cursor and scroll through a document is a great boon after you've been struggling with something like Ed, so do yourself a favour and check it out. I've seen many come and go and tried the best percentage of them and haven't looked back yet.

☞p.36

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One problem with using text editors such as Ed or *Qed* is that when they save files, they don't supply an icon for the file. You can view any text file from the CLI simply by TYPEing it.

Type My_Text will scroll the contents of the My_Text file in the CLI window. The scrolling can be paused by pressing any key and resumed with the backspace key. Another technique is just to hold the right mouse button to pause the scrolling. But what if you want to be able to read the file from workbench?

Reading text files from Workbench

This is not as difficult as it might seem. If the editor you use to create files does not supply an icon for workbench, simply supply one yourself. While it is possible to make an appropriate icon with a tool like Icon Ed (also on your workbench), it is far easier to simply pinch one from another file which already has one.

Everybody who has an unmodified Workbench disk will also have a copy of Notepad. This is a type of joke which Commodore decided to include on your system disk and call a word processor.

To be fair, it is very simple to use and probably a fair introduction to word processing for the utter beginner, albeit lacking somewhat in documentation.

When Notepad saves a file, it supplies the file with a Project icon. This is just the thing you need to view your own creations from Workbench. Here's how to go about it:

Let's say you have a file on your Workbench disk created with Notepad called My_File. If you do a "Dir" of the disk in Cli, you will notice that there is also an entry named "My_File.info". This .info file is the actual icon which you see on WorkBench.

You could simply RENAME the .info file to that of the file you want to use, but that would effectively leave you without an icon for the My_File file! (I'm sure that there's a better way to word that, but anyway ...) To avoid this problem, go through the following steps in a CLI, assuming the file you want to create an icon for is called "Other-File".

Copy My_File.info to Ram:
Cd Ram: Rename My_File.info as Other-File.info
Copy Other-File.info to df0:

And that's all there is to it! Next time you click open your disk on Workbench, you will notice another icon named Other-File in it.However, because this icon was a Notepad created icon; when you double click it, the Amiga will begin to load Notepad and display your file in it. In order to use a text viewing utility like *Most* or *Less* to view Other-File, you must change the icon's default value appropriately.

To do this, click once on the Other-File icon and select Info from the Workbench menu bar. A screen will appear which gives you various information about the icon you have selected. Click in the box named "Default Tool" and press the Amiga key and X simultaneously. The contents of the box will disappear. Now type in :C/less and click on the save gadget in the bottom left corner.

Now the icon will default to the public domain *Less* text viewer in the disk's c directory. (*Less* is available on any Fred Fish disk in the public domain libraries). You can use any text viewer you choose simply by changing the icon's default value appropriately. Just make sure you have a copy of the viewer you wish to use on the disk, otherwise you will get an error message.

Speeding up slow disks

Once you've done a fair bit of writing and saving to any given disk, you will notice that it seems to take more time to access anything from it. The reason this happens is that things tend to go a bit all over the place when saving to a disk. This will be particularly noticeable on Workbench with the appearance of icons.

There are a few programs around that speed up disk access, and one which comes to mind is B.A.D. This is a commercial program which does an excellent job by reorganizing any disk's contents for optimum performance in either Cli or Workbench. However there is a cheaper and reasonably effective way of getting a similar result simply by using the COPY command.

First of all you will need to format a blank disk. Either choose "Initialize" from the Workbench menu or in the CLI:

Format Drive DF1: Name ANYNAME

Assuming the slow disk is in Df0: and the ANYNAME disk is in df1: You now just COPY the slow disk to the newly formatted disk using this procedure:

Copy Df0: to Df1: all The Amiga will take a fair bit of time to complete the procedure if the disk is fairly full, but once it has done its job, you should find that the newly copied disk has much quicker disk access speeds. Why? Because when you copy a whole disk's contents to another disk, the Amiga reorganizes the structure of the destination disk and puts files relating to each other nearer to each other and stuff like that.

What about More?

Most will know that if you click on a text icon from a word processor, hold down the shift key and double click the "More" icon in WB 1.3, then the file will be displayed by the More viewer. But did you know that you can also do the reverse?

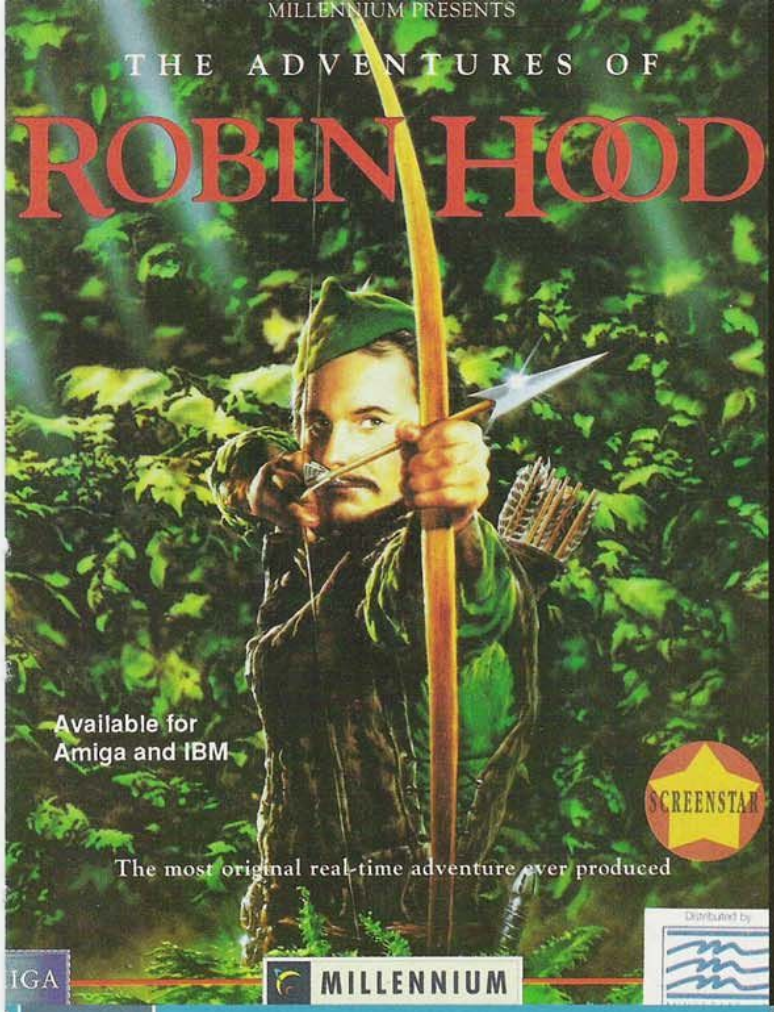
Let's say you have a document produced by Notepad and you wanted to work on it in your *KindWords* word processor. All you need do is click once on the Notepad icon, hold down the Shift key and double click the *KindWords* word processor icon. *KindWords* will then load with the document in question already loaded on screen.

Appointing a Pointer

Pointers and Workbench go together like bread goes with butter. One often sees various creations on other disks and it is possible to have any type of pointer you may see without the need of spending ages trying to re-create it with the preferences program.

For example, if you see a pointer which particularly impresses you on a public domain disk or whatever, simply copy the System-Configuration file from that disk to the devs directory of the disk you wish to use that pointer with. You will first need to delete or rename the system-configuration file on your own disk.

Once you have the other disk's configuration file on your own disk, re-boot and you will find your preferred pointer now exists on your own disk. However, as the System-Configuration file also contains details of screen colours, printer settings etc, you will still need to enter Preferences to reset all of these to your own personal liking. Still heaps simpler than having to draw a complicated pointer from scratch! Till next time... ❑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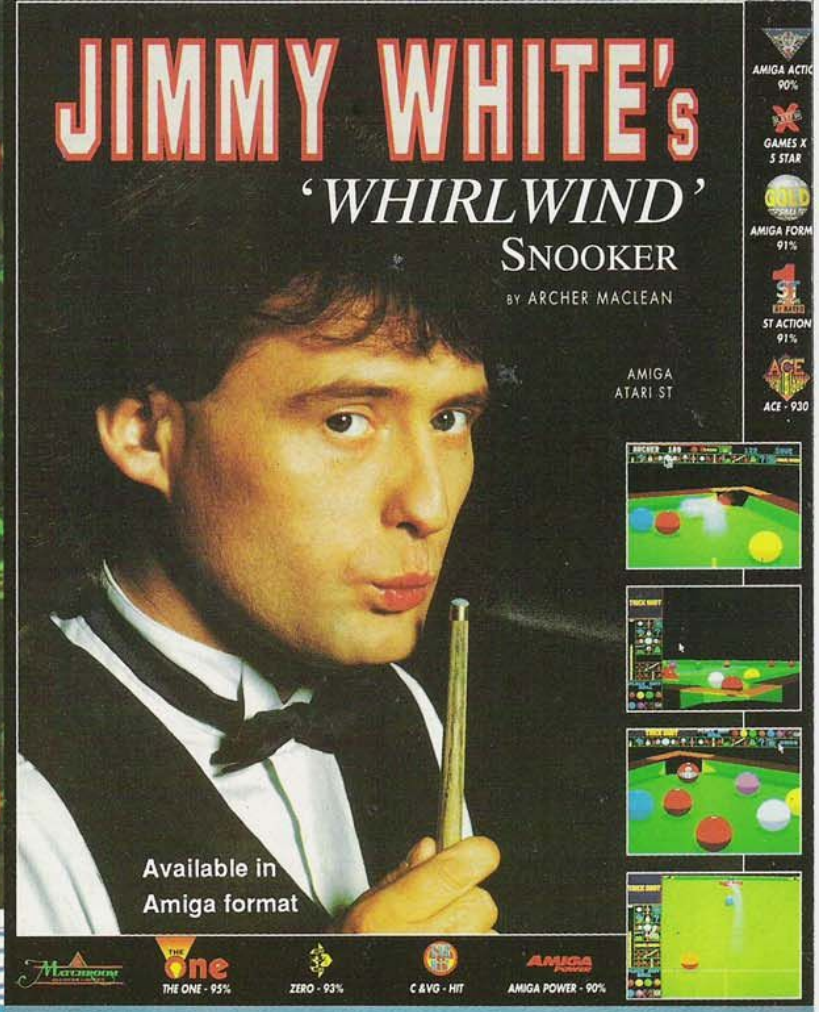
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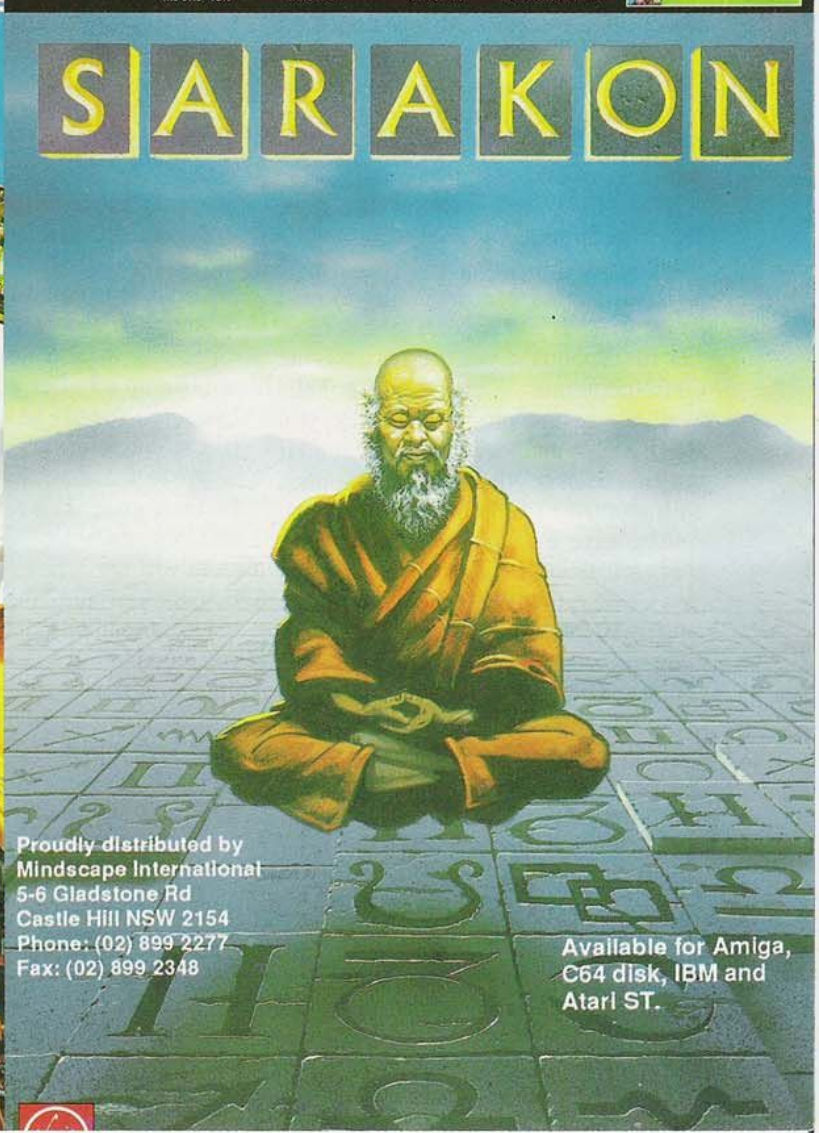
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Amiga BASIC Graduation Part 2

Disk files

A file is any collection of data stored on a disk. It could be a program, a data file, an icon, or any of countless of other types.

From the workbench environment, you may already be familiar with different types of files. Choosing 'INFO' from the Workbench menu gives you information on certain types of files.

Tool: An executable program. Something that runs.

Project: A data file used by an application. All AmigaBASIC programs, for instance are projects used by the AmigaBASIC executable. What we are exclusively concerned with from AmigaBASIC is the second type of file (known to workbench as a project).

I'll be referring to them as data files. I'll also refer to AmigaBASIC as BASIC from now on.

BASIC gives you the ability to read from, write to and append to data files. The first command you need to use is the OPEN command. What this does is make available to the program the file you specify. You cannot access a file until it has first been opened (the same applies with an office file in a manilla folder). But because BASIC demands a neater approach than at the office, you must also CLOSE the file when you are done with it. There is no provision for leaving it on your desk! (If you do this at the office you could lose some data from the file - well, the same thing applies from BASIC, so the analogy is good).

In this article we'll develop a simple name and address book manager so you can see how the theory ties in with actual code.

The OPEN command

There are two syntaxes for the OPEN command. The first is the easy way:

OPEN "<Filespec>" FOR <MODE> AS <Num>

Where <FileSpec> is the name of the file (which can be a string variable or a typed-in name or a combination); <MODE> is the mode of access (INPUT, OUTPUT or APPEND>; and <Num> is the channel number of that file.

I love the first syntax, as this is where BASIC is probably most English-like. For instance 'OPEN "S:Startup-Sequence" FOR INPUT AS #1' seems to make sense to someone who's never seen BASIC before. You open the file, for input as number 1.

The alternative syntax for the OPEN command is actually the preferred one, as it will be more transportable to other versions of BASIC. AC-BASIC handles the first Syntax, but none of the others do:

```
OPEN "<M>",<Num>,<"FileSpec">,<Buffer>
```

Where <M> is the first letter of the mode (and can be I, O, A or R - Random access - covered later); <Num> and <FileSpec> are the same; and <Buffer> is the buffer size for the file.

The buffer size is a concept you do not have to be familiar with, however it warrants explanation. When BASIC opens a disk file it attempts to read into memory as large a part of the file as possible. It is certainly NOT worth accessing a file on a byte-by-byte basis, especially from a floppy disk. BASIC will fill up a buffer with the number of bytes you specify in <buffer> from the file, so that future accesses may not have to go to the disk, but to the memory buffer instead. This really speeds things up.

If you are writing to the file, then BASIC waits until the buffer size is full before actually dropping it to disk. So if you are running on floppies, it will speed things up if you specify a large buffer size. Be warned, however, the buffer size does take up memory, so limit your buffer size to a reasonable amount. (With BASIC it's limited to 32,767 bytes anyway).

Naturally, once the buffer size has been filled, then another access to the disk is necessary to grab another bufferload of data. Because I have a hard drive, I tend to use rather low buffer sizes, as the disk access is fast, but floppy users may like to up the buffer size at the expense of more ram being used.

Some example OPENs may look like:

```
OPEN "I",#3,"S:Startup-sequence",1024 [opens
the startup-sequence for reading (input) as
channel 3 with a buffer size of
1k].path$="DH1:Binaries/Data/"
...filename$=path$+"Prog.data"OPEN
"A",#32,filename$,128[opens DH1:binaries/data/
Prog.data for append as channel 32 with a
buffer size of 128 bytes.
```

Notice how you can conveniently set strings as the filename or maybe the pathname to a certain directory, and figure out the filename from them].

```
OPEN "O",#1,"Scores"[Opens the file "scores"
in the CURRENT DIRECTORY for writing
(output) as channel 1.
```

Because the buffer size is omitted, it will default to 128 bytes. Because the filespec only contains a name, the file will be opened in the current directory. If the program's been run from the CLI it inherits the current directory from that. If run from workbench, however, the current directory is set to the same directory the program and icon is in].

I've glossed the channel number, so I'd better tell you about that. Up to 99 files can be open at the same time, and once you have opened them, BASIC will then refer to them as that channel number. You no longer need to include the file names, but can then refer to the file by its channel number. If it's still not clear, it will be shortly when you see some examples.

The CLOSE command

You use this when you've finished with a file. When this command is executed the file buffer is flushed meaning if you are writing to a file it's written to the disk regardless of how big the buffer is, or if you are reading from the file, the memory is freed for other uses.

It also means that other applications

☞p.42

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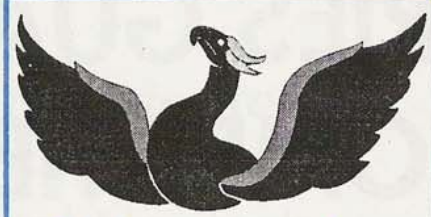

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are free to use the file, because while BASIC has a file open, other applications won't be able to access the same file (Dos Error 202 - Object in Use). It will also free up the channel number for further use in BASIC.

There are two ways of using the CLOSE command. 'CLOSE' on its own closes ALL open files. Or you may go 'CLOSE #x' which closes the file with channel number 'x'.To force you into being tidy, all open files are closed if BASIC executes an END, CLEAR, SYSTEM or NEW command. This is for your own protection, however I wouldn't recommend relying on this. In fact, I had a big argument with my COBOL tutor once on the strengths and weaknesses of closing files. My policy is to always close a file as soon as I'm done with it. So if I want to read just one line in it, I'll open it, input the line and close it in a matter of three or four lines of code. My COBOL tutor said you should always close your files at the end of the program.In the multitasking environment we have, I maintain it's good policy to only use as much of the system as you really need to. And by ensuring files are closed as soon as possible, this frees them up for other tasks. Besides, what if the machine crashes before it gets to the end of the program? If you've got a file open that you are writing to, then that's it for that file. Irrecoverable. You'll see it on the disk as a zero byte size file next time you reboot.

Also, with BASIC you can cheat. If you close a file channel that's not open, then the statement will have no effect. (In COBOL this would cause the machine to self-destruct, apparently). So to make sure of things, you can close a file more than once and get away with it.

Our program

With what we know, our address-book program is going to look like this:

```
'Pathname for the data file - you should change it to suit ' your setup as appropriate. Ensure it ends with a slash if ' a directory or a colon if it's the top level of a disk eg:

RAM:Path$="DH0:BASIC/Work/" '
Define the filenameAddFile$=path$+"Address.dat" '
Open the file for writingOPEN "O",#1,addfile$,1024 ' <- Insert program hereCLOSE #1 END
```

Pretty useless, eh? I think we'll need to see how we can write data out to the file. The type of file I am first going to deal with is called a SERIAL file because the data is available only by reading in the whole file from the start to the end. Later, I'll cover the random file operations, which are a bit harder to setup, but much quicker because you can access a record anywhere in the file without having to read all the data before that record.

> In this article we'll develop a simple name & address book manager so you can see how the theory ties in with the actual code.

Writing data to a (serial) fileBASIC uses the same commands to write to a file as it does to print text to the screen. That is, the PRINT command. However, you append the channel number to the print command so that BASIC knows that that PRINT is not sending to the screen, but rather to the file channel you have opened. So a use may be along these lines. Type in the following fragment (changing the path$ definition) and see what happens.I should warn you that if you open a file for "O"utput, and the filename already exists, BASIC will quite happily overwrite the old file without even telling you about it. So be careful there isn't already a file called "address.dat" around when you go to run this program.

```
Path$="DH0:BASIC/Work/" '^ change this line to your working directory ' see comments in above program.AddFile$=path$+"Address.dat"
OPEN "O",#1,addfile$,1024
PRINT #1, "Peter Deane"
PRINT #1, "PO Box 13"
PRINT #1, "Waratah"
PRINT #1, "NSW"
PRINT #1, "2298"
CLOSE #1
END
```

You will end up getting TWO files in your path$. One is 'address.dat' which will simply be my name and address details. You can use the DOS 'TYPE' command to view this from the CLI window if you like. The other is 'address.dat.info' which is the icon BASIC will give you with any file it has to create. You get one automatically no matter what sort of file you create, so you may like to add a line after:

```
CLOSE #1:KILL AddFile$+".info"
```

I'll show you a better way of doing this later. If the icons don't bother you, then just leave them there. The icon is created after the file is closed, so don't try to KILL it until after the CLOSE command because it won't exist and you'll get an error.

You can also use the PRINT USING command if you wish to format numerical data in a fixed form. The command is the same as if you were printing to the screen, except with the addition of the '#x' for the channel number. I'll leave it to you to investigate 'PRINT #x, USING'.

Reading Data from a (Serial) File

Now we actually have the file Address.dat on our disks, we can start to get some information back from it.Some useful commands we can use while retrieving data are:

EOF(), LOF() and LOC(). See the BASIC manual for the specifics of each. For instance try:

```
Path$="DH0:BASIC/Work/"
AddFile$=path$+"Address.dat"
OPEN "I",#1,addfile$,1024
PRINT "File Name:  ";addfile$
PRINT "File Length: ";LOF(1)count%=0
WHILE NOT EOF(1)  LINE INPUT #1,temp$
count%=count%+1
WEND
PRINT "File Lines:  ";count%
CLOSE #1
PRINT
END
```

The construction EOF(x) is very useful for reading in files to their end. If we have reached the end of the file, EOF(x)

will resolve as TRUE, meaning, "Yep, we're at the end of the file, don't read any more." otherwise EOF(x) will return FALSE (and actually equal 0) meaning you can keep reading. As was the case for writing data out, you use the same commands for getting information from a file as you would from the screen. The INPUT command, only it's INPUT #x (again) instead of the plain INPUT.

LINE INPUT is more useful for getting information back from serial files as it will read a line at a time. If you simply used INPUT, then if there was a comma in the actual data (EG Deane, Peter), that would be regarded as TWO records for the purpose of the INPUT command.

There's also another great way of getting the data out of the file a byte at a time. The command is INPUT$. Syntax is:

```
INPUT$(<chars>,<FileChannel>)
```

Where <chars> is how many characters you wish to read, and the channel number is the channel number of a currently open file. Let's see INPUT$ at work:

```
Path$="DH0:BASIC/Work/"
AddFile$=path$+"Address.dat"
OPEN "I",#1,addfile$,1024toplimit%=LOF(1)
FOR k%=1 TO toplimit%  temp$=INPUT$(1,1)
PRINT temp$;
FOR jj=1 TO 100
NEXT jj
NEXT k%
CLOSE #1
PRINT
END
```

This will simply grab a byte at a time from the file, print it to the screen, and then pause slightly (due to the do-nothing FOR jj% loop). This application is pretty simple, however there are ways of using the byte-by-byte approach. One application that springs to mind is to search for LINEFEEDs (CHR$(10)) in a file and writing out a new file with CARRIAGE RETURNs and LINEFEEDs at the end of each line for transferring text files from the Amiga to the IBM, because IBMs need both CR & LF.

Such a program may look like:

```
INPUT "Name of input file ";in$out$=in$+".converted"

OPEN "I",#1,in$,1024limit%=LOF(1)
OPEN "O",#2,out$,1028
FOR k%=1 to limit% ' get test variable as an integer - faster
test%=ASC(INPUT$(1,1))
IF test%=10 THEN   PRINT #2,CHR$(13);CHR$(10);
ELSE   PRINT #2,CHR$(test%);
END IF
NEXT k%
CLOSE #2
CLOSE #1
END
```

This worked splendidly, however I'd like to have seen a few

☞ p. 45

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progress reports, as it was quite slow converting this article. Every so many bytes it would be quite easy to print your k% up, so the user doesn't think it's crashed or something.

Let's return to our addressbook project now, and see what we can add. Since this is a database, we really should define our database structure. For simplicity, let's simply make it a 5 field record. Because we are using a serial file, we don't have to worry about our record sizes - they will just appear on separate lines, and can be virtually any size you want. I'll be adding a few bells and whistles now, so try to work out what's going on from the context and comments. We'll still be using the file address.dat you created earlier, so don't delete it yet.

Simple Address Book Program

```
    'Change as necessary
Path$="DH0:BASIC/Work/"

MainLoop:

    ' Print Menu
CLS
PRINT
PRINT "Simple Address Book Menu"
PRINT
PRINT "[A]dd to Database"
PRINT "[R]ead Database"
PRINT
PRINT "[Q]uit"

    ' Poll inkey
xx$=UCASE$(INKEY$)

    ' Poll inkey until you get Q, R or A
WHILE xx$<>"Q" AND xx$<>"R" AND xx$<> "A"
xx$=UCASE$(INKEY$)
WEND

    ' Branch to correct procedure
IF xx$="Q" THEN
END

ELSEIF xx$="A" THEN

GOSUB addstuff
    xx$=""

ELSEIF xx$="R" THEN

GOSUB readstuff
    xx$=""
END IF

    ' loop around

GOTO MainLoop

'---------

addstuff:
'---------
CLS
AddFile$=path$+"Address.dat"

    ' Get details
PRINT
PRINT "Enter Name ";
LINE INPUT nam$
    ' you can't use 'name' as the variable name,
    ' because this is a reserved word for renaming files
PRINT
PRINT "Enter Street Address ";
LINE INPUT streetadd$
PRINT
PRINT "Enter Suburb ";
LINE INPUT suburb$
PRINT
PRINT "Enter State ";
LINE INPUT state$
PRINT
PRINT "Enter PostCode ";
LINE INPUT postcode$
PRINT

PRINT "Writing to file...";

    ' Open it for APPENDING to the end
OPEN "A",#1,addfile$,1024
PRINT #1,nam$
PRINT #1,streetadd$
PRINT #1,suburb$
PRINT #1,state$
PRINT #1,postcode$

    ' All done, close it and return
CLOSE #1

PRINT "...done!"
PRINT
PRINT "Press Any Key"
WHILE INKEY$=""
WEND

RETURN

'---------
readstuff:
'---------

AddFile$=path$+"Address.dat"

    ' Count lines in file
OPEN "I",#1,addfile$,1024
count%=0
WHILE NOT EOF(1)
    LINE INPUT #1, temp$
count%=count%+1
WEND
CLOSE #1

PRINT
PRINT "There are ";(count%/5);" records available."
PRINT
INPUT "Which record number to view ";view%
' check for record number beyond file
IF view%>(count%/5) THEN
    PRINT
    PRINT "There aren't that many records!"
    GOTO readstuffexit
END IF

' Open the file again
OPEN "I",#1,addfile$,1024

' Seek to record number by reading in all previous entries
' (If we want record 1, do nothing, we're there now!)
'IF view%>1 THEN
'               V five lines per record
    FOR k%=1 TO (view%-1)*5
    LINE INPUT #1,temp$
    NEXT k%
END IF

PRINT
PRINT "Record # ";view%
PRINT
LINE INPUT #1, nam$
PRINT "Name       : ";nam$
LINE INPUT #1, streetadd$
PRINT "Street Address: ";streetadd$
LINE INPUT #1, suburb$
PRINT "Suburb     : ";suburb$
LINE INPUT #1, state$
PRINT "State      : ";state$
LINE INPUT #1, postcode$
PRINT "PostCode   : ";postcode$

CLOSE #1
readstuffexit:

PRINT
PRINT "Press Any Key"
WHILE INKEY$=""
WEND
RETURN
```

Comments

I have tried to avoid putting too much into the program because I'll leave that for you. Some suggestions for changes are adding the option to view ALL records one at a time from the 'readstuff' subroutine, and adding a function to search through particular fields (or at least the name field) for a certain text. You may like to add more fields (for example phone number). In all, the possibilities are endless.

Next time

Well, we've seen how to do simple operations with serial files, so next article will tell you to forget all that you have learnt and use random files instead. Random files are harder to set-up, but once you have the structure defined, they provide much faster access, because you can jump straight to an individual record, rather than having to read in all previous records. For long databases, they are essential.

I'd like your comments on this series. If you wish to contact me, please write to:

Peter Deane
PO Box 13
WARATAH NSW 2298

If you have a modem, you can call my BBS (Inquestor) on (049) 676808. If you have any specific questions, I'll try to either answer them in these pages, or let you know when I'll be covering that particular aspect, so please keep the feedback rolling in. ❑

IN THE Domain

Over the past six months many new public domain libraries have sprung up on the scene. The number of collections now available in Australia has grown considerably, as has the potential confusion in trying to select software from catalogues several disks long. The fact that we now enjoy a strong choice is a good thing. However, for beginners, the huge range can be off putting. Of all the collections available, Fred Fish has maintained a more serious approach to the content of his disks. Although the collection is not organised into anything more than chronological order, there are various people who have put together theme disks by extracting programs of a similar nature from the collection onto one disk. The number of disks has now hit 540 - with the standard of program you expect to find improving as the months go by. Here's some of the better programs I spotted on the most recent few disks:

Fish 533 - BootGen

This program creates a bootmenu for floppy disks. You simply enter the name of ten programs and the program will do the rest. When you boot the disk a menu will appear where you can choose one of ten program names, which automatically will be loaded.

Version 3.4, binary only

Author: Frank Enderle

Fish 533 - Conquest

Lore of Conquest is a war game similar in concept to the board game *Risk*. You are the lord of an entire world, destined to rule the galaxy. Some worlds are virgin fruits, ready for you to colonise. Some worlds have natives who do not wish to accept your rule, these you must conquer for they will yield more valuable resources. As you claim the galaxy you will find, you are not the only one extending your dominion. This is a two-player game, so be prepared to defend yourself and take what is yours!

Version 1.6, an update to version 1.5 on disk 523. Includes enhanced galaxy map, instant replay option, timed turns, symmetrical universe, and more.

Binary only, shareware.

Author: Michael Bryant

Fish 534 - Term

A gift-ware telecommunications program written for AmigaDOS release 2.x (Kickstart 37.74 and Workbench 37.33 or higher required, Kickstart 37.175 and Workbench 37.52 recommended). Features include total configurability, full Arexx control, Xpr-transfer - support, filetype - identification after download, cut and paste / point-and-click on screen, auto up - and download, scrollable review buffer of unlimited size, solid and fully-featured VT100 / VT220 / ANSI emulation, optional fast atomic terminal emulation, hotkey support, powerful phonebook and dialing functions, ability to save and print the contents of the screen as IFF - ILBM or ASCII file, full overscan and screen resolution support (new ECS screen modes included), asynchronous operation and a lot more. Comes with six Xpr-transfer libraries (ascii, jmodem, kermit, quickb, xmodem and zmodem) and documentation both in German and in English. This is version 1.8a and also includes the full 'C' and assembly language source code.

Author: Olaf 'Olsen' Barthel

Fish 535 - Accent

A universal accented character converter for Amiga, IBM-PC, Macintosh, and C64 files written in most West European languages (Danish, Finnish, French, German, Italian, Icelandic, Norwegian, Spanish, Swedish, and more). Works with either ASCII or *Word Perfect* files.

This is a major update to version 1.5 on disk 454 (where it was called *Vortex*). New features include a graphical user interface, simple file reader, and copy option. Binary only.

Author: Michel Laliberte

Fish 535 - FracBlank

A commodities screen blanker written for AmigaDOS release 2.x. When running will blank the screen and start to draw real plane fractals such as described in the September 1986 issue of *Scientific American*. The resulting images may remind you of spiders' webs, lace or even the Chladnian patterns formed by grains of sand strewn across a vibrating surface.

Version 1.4, includes source in 'C' and assembly language. AmigaDOS 2.x required.

Author: Olaf 'Olsen'áBarthel

Fish 537 - BootGames

Two tiny games which fit on the bootblocks of a boot disk. *BootOut* is a *Breakout* style game and *Squash* is a squash type game (just like on those old TV games).

BootOut V5.X and Squash V4.3. Includes assembly source.

Author: Paul Hayter

Fish 538 - Cross

A program that creates crossword puzzles. Has a message data file to allow easy translation into almost any human language, with English and German currently supported. This is version 4.1, an update to version 3.3 on disk 464. Major new features are several new printer drivers including 'generic' and 'LaTeX', and many minor improvements.

Includes source in M2Amiga Modula-2.

Author: Jurgen Weinelt

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Fish 535 - FO

Fast Optimiser is a new optimizer for AmigaDOS disks. It can optimise one disk in less than 2 min, 30 sec. *FO* supports WorkBench or CLI modes and allows you to use unformatted disks as the destination. At least 1 Mb memory required.

This is version v1.0.

Includes some source in C.

Author: Fabien Campagne

Fish 538 - NGTC

Release Two, Revision 1, of a trivia game based on *Star Trek: The Next Generation* TV series. This is a bug fix containing a new game module. You also need release two from disks 506 and 507, and release one from disks 404 and 405. Created with *The Director* Version 2.

Binary only.

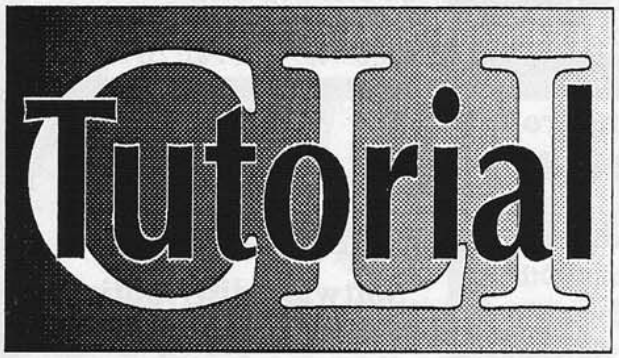
Author: Gregory Epley

Fish 540 - ParM

Parameterable Menu. *ParM* allows you to build menus to run whatever program you have on a disk. *ParM* can run programs either in WorkBench or CLI mode. This is an alternative to *MyMenu* which can run only when workbench is loaded. *ParM* can have its own little window, can attach menus to the CLI window you are running it from, or to the WB menus, just like *MyMenu*. This is version 3.00, an update to version 2.5r on disk 419.

Includes source in C.

Author: Sylvain Rougier, Pierre Carrette



Coming to grips with the CLI - A tutorial for beginners

PART 16
by Andrew Leniart

There are two interfaces available to us with the Amiga. Workbench - with its extensive use of icons - and the Command Line Interface (CLI) which we are mainly on about here. There is little doubt about which is the more powerful interface, but sometimes it's just plain easier to use the Workbench to achieve something that you want to do. In that type of situation, it would be crazy not to take advantage of Workbench. Why walk when you can ride? The trick is being able to determine quickly when it's best to use either method.

Workbench / CLI

This month we'll be looking at Workbench equivalents to the CLI and how we go about determining the best time to use which method to do something. If your typing is not the best and you are still rather slow, looking for a letter before you can press it, then it would be far easier to flick behind the CLI to Workbench and copy a directory over by dragging its drawer icon across, if it has one, rather than having to type in and correct spelling mistakes in the CLI.

Before we can work out that something like that is possible, we need to be able to quickly recognise when in the CLI if the directory we wish to copy does indeed have an icon for it. Just look for a file name that is identical in name, but with an extension of '.info' on the end of it. If it's there, then there is an icon for it. By the same token, any drawer or program that you can see on the Workbench will have at least two file names for it in the CLI. So "clock" on your Workbench disk in the utilities drawer will consist of the file names CLOCK - which is the actual program, and CLOCK.INFO, which is the Workbench icon that you see. Delete the Clock.info file and you can still use the program from the CLI, but it will no longer be visible on the Workbench. Try it and see ...

Terminology

Here is a basic list of terminology often used for particular types of icons and processes on Workbench and what their equivalents could be when working in the CLI.

When you open up a disk on Workbench and see a whole stack of drawers or programs there ready to be run or opened, then you are actually looking at the ROOT (main or top) directory of that disk, if you were to pop it into a drive and do a DIR on it in the CLI.

If there is a Notepad project icon in the utilities drawer of your Workbench disk called README and you were to double click it, Notepad would load up and display the 'ReadMe' file. To do the same in the CLI would require the following command:

DF0:Utilities/Notepad ReadMe

If you wish to copy something from one disk to another, you would use the COPY command in the CLI. The same thing can be achieved by simply dragging the program's icon from its disk window to the window of the disk you wish to copy it to. This can be a considerably quicker method if the program you are copying is imbedded in two or three directories from the root.

To move a file or program from one directory to another requires the use of the RENAME command. When icons are present, the same result can be achieved simply by dragging the appropriate icons from one drawer to another on the Workbench.

Copying a whole disk in the CLI requires the use of the DISKCOPY command. However if you have two drives, then all you need do is drag the disk's icon that you want to copy on top of the destination drive's disk icon and away you go.

Formatting a disk requires the FORMAT command. The same process can be achieved on Workbench by clicking once on the disk icon that is to be formatted and selecting the INITIALIZE option from the Workbench pull down menu's.

You can use MAKEDIR to create new directories on your disks and move files (or programs) into the new directories by using the RENAME command in the CLI. Sometimes it is quicker to duplicate the Empty drawer on your Workbench, rename it via the pull down menus and drag the appropriate icons into the drawer. If you want to put directories within directories, then this too is possible simply by dragging one drawer on top of another on Workbench. A lot of the time, I like to use a combination of both Workbench and CLI to perform tasks like this.

Multitasking in the CLI is achieved by using the RUN command when starting programs and then firing up another from the same CLI. The equivalent to this in Workbench is simply clicking on one icon, waiting for that program to start, and then clicking on another.

What's where

Probably the most confusing aspect for most people when trying to use both CLI and Workbench in any one session is being able to recognise what's what and where. Well, it's mainly a trick of just getting used to it, I suppose. Perhaps the following list may help some ...

A DRAWER icon on Workbench is a DIRECTORY in the CLI which stems from the root directory of that disk. The root directory - as mentioned before - is the disk's main window when opened up on Workbench.

A PROJECT icon like the ones created by Notepad when you save a file is actually represented as a filename in the

CLI.

A TOOL icon that runs a program like "clock" is simply the PROGRAM itself when in the CLI.

So that's about the size of it. It's useful to be able to take full advantage of everything your machine offers. There isn't much point in buying an Amiga and then using it strictly as you would an IBM clone by avoiding Workbench like the plague. By the same token, people that avoid CLI and 'just' use Workbench will never be able to access the full power of the little beast which they own.

Experiment with both and get to know what everything is in its own environment. Once you're familiar with it, you'll find yourself flicking between the Workbench and CLI when it suits you - which in turn makes your computing much more enjoyable.

Third party utilities

CLI and Workbench users alike have an array of programs, games and utilities available to them which have been written by enthusiasts who have kindly put them into the public domain libraries. Quite a few of these are useful to the CLI user which is why I've decided to cover some of them in this column. One particular program which I enjoy and use to death is a program by the name of *AutoCLI* by Nic Wilson. This program is great and makes bringing up a CLI so easy that you will probably never need to double click on a CLI icon again.

Here is a quick run down on what it does once installed:

It gives you the ability to open up a CLI - anytime - simply with the press of two keys on the keyboard. It also speeds up your pointer so that moving around the screen becomes a breeze. It will also blank the screen for you. Mouse blanking is another feature which is handy when writing text files - as the pointer disappears as soon as you press a key. No more need to click on back and front gadgets in the Workbench as you can move and shuffle windows and screens by the press of a couple of pre-defined keys - plus a whole host of other features to boot. All of the options can be turned on or off to your own preference, again

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with the simple press of a couple of keys.

Where do you get it?

You can get this fab little piece of software direct from the author - Nic Wilson - by writing to him direct at:

Nic Wilson Software
138d South Street
Toowoomba QLD 4350

Alternatively, grab copy of a PD disk that has the program on it. Write to a PD distributor such as Prime Artifax (08) 879 7455 or Megadisc (02) 959 3692 and ask for a catalogue disk of all their PD and find it that way. At the same time, you can see all the other disks available with similar free utilities and games. It should also be available on bulletin boards. It's here on mine (Andy's Attic!) if you can't find it on the BBS's that you most often call.

Making it work

Installing *AutoCli* is truly simplicity itself. Just copy it into your C directory and that's about it. Open up a CLI in the normal way and type in *AutoCLI* and away you go.

Press the left - Amiga + escape and you will see what I meant about the ease of getting a CLI up and running. Now if we needed to do that every time we wanted to get it running in the background then it would soon become a bit of a pain. So the best idea is to stick it into your startup-sequence. Then it's always there. Here's how to do it:

Fire up your favorite text editor and load up your disk's startup-sequence.

ie: Using Ed, you would type in a CLI:

ED DF0:s/startup-sequence

Make a blank line somewhere before the LoadWb command in the file and type in the following line:

AUTOCLI -f -w -n -m -b -q 1000

That's it! Save your modified startup sequence and reboot your machine. Now you can get a CLI or shell at any time simply by holding down the left Amiga key and pressing the escape key. The above command line will enable all of *AutoCLI's* options. Pressing the left Amiga key and the help key will bring up a window that will allow you to switch off the ones you don't want with your mouse. Read the doc's that accompany the program for more information on all the switches and simply edit your startup-sequence again and remove the ones you don't need

That's just one of the utilities available from the PD libraries to make life easier for you when working with the CLI. In future instalments, you can look forward to others that are useful being covered here as well.

Till the next time... ❑

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Defender of the Crown

The lights dim, and the experience begins. It is October, 1149. King Richard has been murdered, and there is no heir to the throne - the nation is torn apart by civil war. You must take the part of a Saxon Lord, and overcome the Norman threat. Only you can save mother England. That's the scenario in *Defender of the Crown*, one of the first games released for CDTV.

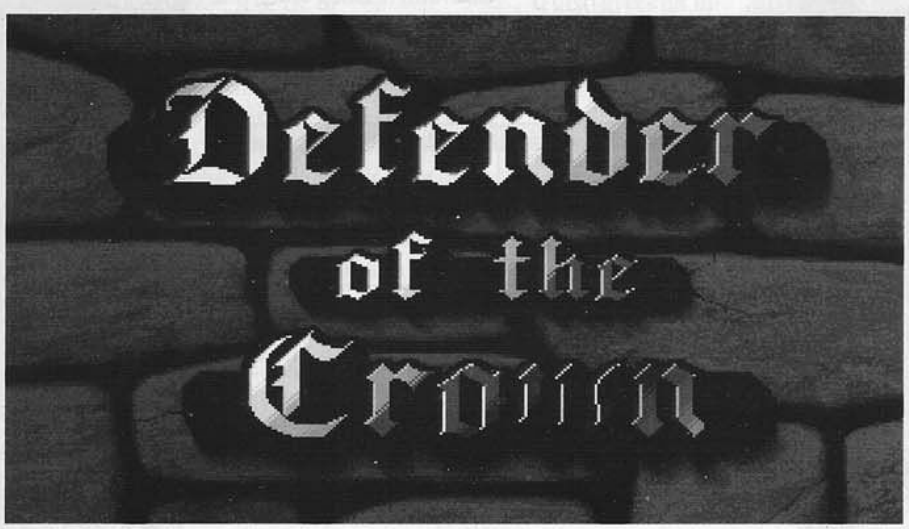
At the start of the game you must choose your character. You can take the part of Wilfred of Ivanhoe, Cedric of Rotherwood, Geoffrey Longsword or Wolfric the Wild. Each has different abilities and weaknesses. Geoffrey Longsword, for example, has average leadership qualities and average jousting ability, but is an excellent swordsman. The abilities of your character should dictate the tactics you adopt in your quest to save England. A colour coded map is displayed, dominated by the castles of six great feudal lords. A parchment menu appears in the corner of the screen - this is where your strategies are shaped.

You may wish to begin by holding a tournament. Here, you can joust for fame - or, if you have any to risk - for large tracts of territory. Any territory you win will automatically increase your income, allowing you to buy more soldiers, knights and catapults.The tournament is one of the 'action sequences' featured in the game. As the opposing rider gallops towards you at full tilt, you must control your wavering lance with the mouse and hit him in the centre of his shield. If you have chosen a character with 'average' jousting skills, you will almost certainly lose both your honour and your land.

Castle raids, on the other hand, are best left to the adept swordsmen. This menu option places you at the head of a raiding party in the courtyard of an enemy Lord's castle. To thrust with your sword, press the 'A' button on your controller - preferably while your opponent's blade is in an upright position. Once the first group of guards is overcome, you move into the castle - and if you win a further encounter, you can make off with the treasure from the strong-room.

Once you've built up a suitable fortune, it's time to hire some more fighting men, increasing both your home and campaign armies. And to attack a neighbouring realm successfully, you will need a catapult. They don't come cheap.

Defender of the Crown has always been a classic Amiga game. With the addition of a CD music track and a spoken narrative, the CDTV version is even more atmospheric than the original. Mind you, I've noticed an interesting phenomenon when the junior Campbells are playing - they invariably press the 'B' button to bypass the narrative and get straight into the action. Another point to note - though I haven't been able to finish the game myself, the junior members of the family have completed it a number of times. If you're a hot-shot, you might find it's a bit too easy.



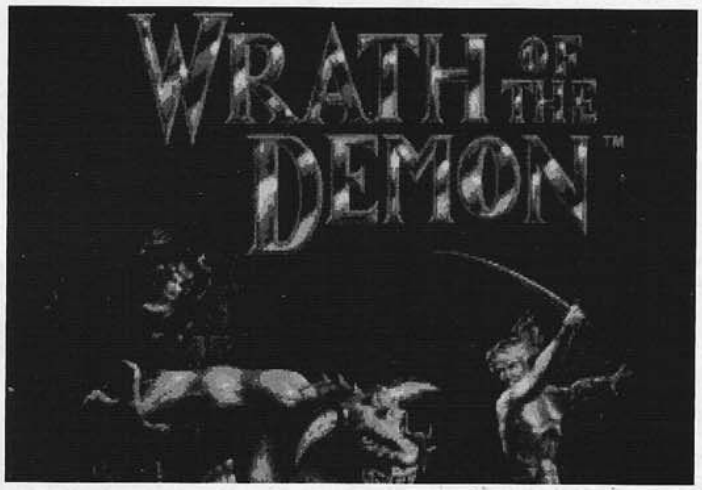
Wrath of the Demon

Legends tell of a time when fear ruled the land. A time when no man, woman or child was safe from the spread of evil. A time when a fierce demon sent his evil minions to roam through the land and make the kingdom his own. I'm trembling already, and I haven't even started the game.

Wrath of the Demon is another direct conversion from the Amiga to CDTV, though unlike *Defender of the Crown*, I haven't been able to find any enhancements at all. Though the standard Amiga soundtrack is haunting and evocative, it hasn't been upgraded to CD quality. And so far - though I'll have to admit I haven't progressed far into the game - there's no added speech either.

Even so, CDTV is well suited to a game featuring over 3 Megabytes of graphics data with 1400 frames of animation running at 60 frames per second with 15 level parallax scrolling. The overall effect is very nice.

In *Wrath of the Demon* you control the hero, a handsome chap whose sole quest is to destroy the evil powers abroad in the kingdom. The action scrolls horizontally, and in the first section you'll find yourself riding a horse. This is tricky - there are bonuses to pick up, and obstacles to jump over. I invariably jumped over the bonuses and



tried to pick up the obstacles. Level 2 is a standard kill, maim and destroy scenario in which you slash at everything that moves. Usually, though, it's me who gets killed, maimed and destroyed. *Wrath of the Demon* is no better than the standard Amiga version of the game - but I guess it doesn't have to be! For me, though, it hasn't had much lasting appeal. Maybe the remote controller is slow to respond, or maybe it's just me, but I just can't make it past Level 2. *Wrath of the Demon* has a recommended retail price of $69.95.

The Fred Fish collection on CD-Rom

Would Fred Fish be where he was today if it wasn't for his funny sounding name? Who knows. But the fact is, Fred is something of a folk-hero in the Amiga software community. From the earliest days of the Amiga, Fred has been running a library of freely distributable public domain software. The library is growing at an alarming rate.

The entire collection - 480 floppy disks as at May 1991 - is sitting in front of me as I write, not in a five-high stack of disk boxes, but on a single compact disk. Before you get too excited, there are a few things to bear in mind. While the disk is designed to run on a CDTV, you won't be able to access most of the files without a fair bit of fiddling. And even when you do, few of them would be of any real use on CDTV alone. These are Amiga programs, so to really benefit from them you'll need an Amiga as well. Typically, the procedure works like this. Plug a standard Amiga external drive into the drive port on the CDTV. Make yourself an autobooting floppy disk that loads a directory utility like *Diskmaster*. Stick it in the external drive, put the Fish Collection in your CDTV slot, and you're ready to roll. The system will boot from the external drive, and *Diskmaster* will show drive CD0: ready and waiting to be accessed. Now it's simply a matter of browsing through the 480 directories and copying the files you want to your external floppy drive ready for use on your Amiga.

Mind you, things will be different when the optional CDTV keyboard and mouse are released sometime after Christmas. Then you'll be able to use many of the programs directly on your CDTV. In the meantime, too, you can try running a program called OSK, which will provide you with an On Screen Keyboard that you can use with your CDTV controller.

The Fred Fish Collection on CD-Rom will also work nicely with Commodore's forthcoming Amiga CD-Rom drive, or with any other ISO 9660 compatible unit. This will be the ideal environment - no messy disk swapping and copying as you run back and forth between the CDTV and your Amiga.

Even so, I've had a mighty fine time chasing up all the public domain programs I've had on my wish list. As usual, many don't quite work. I'd been longing to try out *AmiDock*, a neat program that lets you launch programs from a row of icons on your screen. Unfortunately, every time I click an icon my Amiga crashes. Such is life in the public domain. Plenty of the other programs I tried worked fine, like *CLAZ*, which converts graphic files to Postscript for output on a laser printer.

The Fred Fish Collection on CD ROM is literally a gold-mine - hundreds of disks, thousands of files, all ready and waiting for use on a single CD.

Available from The Hard Disk Cafe (ph 02 979 5833), *The Fred Fish Collection on CD ROM* has a recommended retail price of just $99.95 - amazing value when you compare it to the cost of 480 floppy disks! ❑

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CDTV FEEDBACK

To sell or not to sell?

Dear Phil, Early this year I bought an Amiga 500. I think it's the best computer I've ever used - and then I read about the new CDTV. I think CDTV sounds terrific, and I'm now considering selling my Amiga 500 and buying a CDTV - but can I use my Amiga 500 disks with the CDTV? Also, the CDTV does not contain a keyboard, which is essential for word processing, but as I use my Amiga mainly for games it is not really a necessity as long as you can run your 3.5" disks with it. I read that an Infra-Red keyboard is coming out soon. When? Also, can external 3.5" drives and joysticks be attached to the CDTV? I hope you can answer these questions for me!

Sean Johnson
Colonel Light Gardens, SA

Ed: *Tough questions, Sean. As things stand, you've basically got two options. Buy a CDTV and upgrade it to a full Amiga specification with the keyboard and peripherals, or else upgrade your Amiga to run CDTV software with the new CD drive due for release just after Christmas. If you trade your A-500 for a CDTV, you'll find you can plug in a stock standard 3.5" drive, and use it to boot the machine from any standard workbench disk. Then you can use a public domain program like OSK (on-screen keyboard) to simulate your keyboard for a while you wait for the release of the infra-red model.*

An infra-red mouse (nicknamed 'The Hamster', because it looks like a mouse with no tail) is also on the way - I've tested a pre-production model, which was beautifully balanced and much nicer to use than the standard Amiga version. Whether standard Amiga games will work on the CDTV setup with an external drive is another matter. I've tested a few, with no success, including F-15 *and* Awesome. *Neither would boot from the external drive.*

Personally, I think in your position you should wait for the release of the Amiga CD drive. Commodore are making no guarantees that it will let you do everything you can do with the CDTV, but it's well worth waiting to check it out for yourself.

Competition from CD-I

Dear Phil, My penpal in the UK says that a new Philips CDI is about to be released there - it has the backing of three major electronics companies and will have the edge over the CDTV in graphics, according to the demos he's seen. Gulp! However, I have read that Commodore UK aren't worried - they reckon that they'll have the upper hand with experience and a one-year margin between the release of the two machines. It seems that they're confident that the CDTV is firmly entrenched in the UK - I hope that with the type of sales we're having the CDTV should be able to stand up to any competition in Australia.

Andrew Gormly, SA

Ed: *A bit of competition never hurt anyone! Mind you, Commodore shouldn't be too cocky about their 12 month advantage, because so far they haven't done much with it! I'm still waiting to see the "second generation software" that Commodore keep promising will blow our hats off. Let's hope things get cracking soon.* ❑

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Letters TO THE EDITOR

Question Time

First off, congratulations on a great publication, just the right amount on technical and entertainment information. Keep up the great work, your efforts are appreciated. Secondly, my thanks for the information you gave me over the phone regarding my purchase of an A2000 and hard drive. It's great to be able to contact someone and get the information you require in a hurry, you saved me lots of money and I now have the exact setup for my requirements.

I have a number of questions which I would appreciate an answer to. But first in answer to Doug Ghiggioli's query in the September issue, the follow p to *Millenium 2.2* is called *Deuterus*. I hope this is of some use.

And now the questions.

1 - There has been much talk about the A690 CD Drive for the A500, but what about the Amiga 2000. Is there going to be one or will we be able to use the A690 as well?

2 - Certain overseas publications are currently issuing expensive and largely useless cover discs. If it is cost effective one or two special discs a year could be of great interest.

3 - Could you recommend a digitiser/ genlock for semi-professional use on the Amiga as well as a suitable colour ink jet printer for output of the images taken?

4 - I have been informed that the RAM chips on the SCSI hard card must be replaced every time you upgrade from 2 to 4 megs. If you have 2 megs and wish to add another 2 megs the original 2 megs chips must be returned and a new 4 meg set purchased. This appears a weird way of doing things, is it true?

5 - In the September issue article on "A2000 or A500: That is the question" you mentioned the flicker fixer and multisync monitor and switching the cable between the video port and the flicker fixer port. Is it possible to have both connected and put some sort of switch in line?

Carl Stephenson
Morwell, Vic

Ed: *1. Yes, a similar product for the A2000 is said to be in development.*

2. Good idea, we'll look into it!

3. Superpic is a good frame grabber/ Genlock/Digitiser - try Phoenix for in-

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formation. We have not tested any Ink Jets recently.

4. Providing you stick to one brand and type of chip, this should never be the case.

5. Yes.

A500 upgrade

I have an Amiga 500 (512k RO and 1/2 meg expansion board). I have been told there is a version of the 500 with 1 Megabyte of chip memory. If this is correct is it possible to upgrade my computer, and could you give me some information on the version 1.3 ROM chip and "Super Agnus" chips.

J. Coakes
Clayfield, QLD

Ed: *Yes, you can upgrade your machine through your local Commodore Centre - call Commodore on (02) 427 4888 for the address. The upgrade involves replacing your existing 1.2 Kickstart and Agnus chip. The main improvements include autobooting of hard drives, and the ability to display higher res graphics in more colours. You can also have more screens open at one time.*

Amiga to IBM or Mac

Can you advise me as an Amiga novice, the best way of achieving compatibility with IBM or Macintosh. These two types of machines are available in my work place and I would like to transfer work between home and the office. Your magazines carry adverts for bridge boards, but these are expensive. Are things like Dos 2 Dos or Mac to Dos interface really useful? (or more trouble than it's worth?) My needs are essentially to use a computer as a word processor.

Michael Desmond

Ed: *Mac to Dos requires a Mac floppy drive and does a very good job of exchanging various files. Dos 2 Dos is similar, however the public domain MSH: works just as well. These two products will let you move data between all three DOS formats. Emulation requires A-MAX (Mac), or (in order of performance and price) Transformer, IBEM, ATONCE or a Bridgeboard for IBM.*

Assign

I have read through your CLI tutorials in the ACR and have found them very helpful. Keep up the good work.

My question for you is - how do I get my A590 hard drive to recognise a program that I have dragged over onto the hard drive, for when I go to use the program by double clicking on it comes up when loaded with a notice up the top 'please insert' whatever the program I have just loaded. So I normally click the cancel box and then use the program.

I know I should 'assign' the programs in my startup sequence. What I need to know is what startup sequence as I have 3. They are startup sequence, startup sequence II and startup sequence HD. Example I have my word processor in a 'Drawer' I named words. One of the programs in it is 'KINDWORDS' so what would be the actual command, and in which startup sequence.

I. Atken
Narribri NSW

Ed: *You need to add the line:*
ASSIGN KINDWORDS: DHO:WORDS
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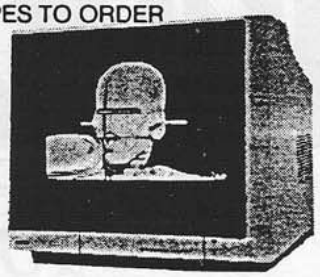

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by Owen James

Art tuition on disk

Art Instruction Software (PO Box 1352, Patchogue, NY 11772) have recently released 'Principles of Composition'. This is an art course on disk which takes you step by step through the principles of artistic design and composition. The package includes a full-featured art program, and upon successful completion of the course the company will send you a certificate. Principles of Composition sells for $US42.95.

C65 still a possibility

Just when you thought the 'C65' rumor had been well and truly put to rest, British magazine *Amiga Shopper* has decided it's time to exhume the idea. The August edition carried a news item headed '8-bit Amiga being tested'. The working name for this new computer is, of course, the C65. According to *Shopper*, Commodore have sent out units to software developers for testing.

The idea of the C65 was to fill the gap between the C64 and the Amiga. Looking at recent prices, however, it appears this gap has already been filled by the A500. Soon after the A3000 was released, A2000 and A500 prices started to tumble - and a new A500 can now be bought for around $700.

Could a new computer fit between the $400 and $700 margin? Commodore's retail sales manager Kelly Sumner has been quoted as saying: "It is a product which has been developed, but at the moment we have no plans to release it. We have a very good line-up and it would be ridiculous to bring in a product that would compete with the Amiga and C64. It will definitely not see the light of day this year."

This year? *Amiga Shopper* reports that Commodore has a policy of reviewing hardware product launches every six months, so there could be a change of heart after Christmas. Don't hold your breath!

C64 Game and Adventure Club

Calling all C64/128 game freaks! Scott Logan would like to hear from game and adventure game enthusiasts interested in forming a club. If that sounds like you, drop Scott a line at 9 Collington St, Mansfield, Brisbane QLD 4122. Don't forget to include a stamped self-addressed envelope.

I've recently been informed of CLUB-64, a Brisbane based BBS. It operates every Thursday, Friday and Saturday nights from about 8:30pm. The number is (07) 808 3839. Are there any more C64 BBSs we should know about?

Demos in general

Something there is absolutely no shortage of are demos. Demos are usually the result of programmers trying to outdo each other in exploiting the capabilities of a computer. If you really want to see what your C64's capable of, check out a recent demo. Music and animation are the two main components. I've recently seen some that use excellent dithering techniques to give the impression of hundreds of colours, and all from a C64! Some are banal, and others just plain smutty, but they're certainly worth a look.

Programming contest

The recent Short Programming contest produced some quite remarkable entries. Some were simple programs to pick next week's winning Lotto numbers, while others were full-blown programming aids. The winners were: Neil Joshi, for his utility 'BackRunner', Glenn Webster, for his entry of 'PageWriter', and Bill Woolford, for his original 'Christmas Card'.

These three will be receiving the prize from Millersoft, a copy of the C64 User Software disk and a copy of PD1, a compilation of Public Domain software. Thanks to all who entered, and a big thankyou to Millersoft Education Software for the prize.

User Software Disk

The User Software disk is finally complete. It contains all the best programs sent in from readers over the past twelve months. Also included is *BackRunner*, Neil Joshi's winning entry. Check out *BackRunner's* features list:

Cursor control from joystick or mouse, automatic timed-save of BASIC or ML programs, Screen blanker, BASIC line trace, an accurate on-screen clock, and more!

Also on the disk is Chris Brand's *The Font Machine*, a GEOS font creation and editing system as good as, if not better than, any commercial release. To get the disk, send a cheque (made payable to Owen James) or money order for six dollars to me care of the C64 Column. Please allow 2-3 weeks for delivery.

PD1 is also now available. It contains all the best PD programs and utilities from both here and overseas. Same ordering method as for the User Software disk. Watch out soon for a GEOS PD compilation.

Public Domain software

C64 public domain is an area that's not often talked about. So, this month we take a quick look at some of the more interesting titles. Firstly, some brief explanations:

Public domain software has no copy-

right. It is software that can be freely distributed providing no financial gain is made. So who writes PD software? Usually 'spare room' programmers who want fame but (surprisingly) little fortune.

Future Writer

This is probably one of the most interesting programs to date. *Future Writer* lets you create messages and letters with music. You begin by selecting the font you want to use. Many are provided, and you can even load your own. The sound track comes next, and again there are many to choose. They're all catchy tracks that have been carefully ripped out of your favourite games!

From here you can start writing your text. The fun part is watching what you wrote as it is rewritten on screen. Did you c ...istake as you typed? *Future Writer* won't l. . our text is presented as though you are typing i ...here - mistakes and all! When complete, *Future* ...ill create a stand-alone executable file containing your t . and music.

Future Composer

Another from the 'Future' series. This one is a music composition program. You work with numbers rather than clefs and staves (similar to *MED* on the Amiga). It takes a while to get used to this system, but is well worth the effort.

Turbo Tape

Now here's a real gem. I've seen *Turbo Tape* in many guises. Usually the only difference is who the credit is given to in the intro screen; the actual ML routines are identical.

As you might imagine, *Turbo Tape* is a utility for datasette users. It can actually make the loading and saving of programs as fast, if not faster, than a disk drive.

There is, of course, a catch. The *Turbo Tape* utility must be loaded before any *Turbo Tape* format file. Even with the combined loading times, it's quicker than an ordinary file. And because the files are compacted you can squeeze three to four times the usual amount of programs on a single tape.

The Final Cartridge III even has a 'Save to Turbo Tape' option which is great for converting your games.

Macview, Imageview & Vgif

These three allow you to view Macintosh, IMG and GIF picture files directly on your C64. The files must first be put on a C64 format disk to be used. The best way to do this is to download the files from a BBS, or hunt for some of the many files that have already been transferred.

Message Creator

Lets 'lamers' create demos! Select a picture, font and music, and write some text for the scroll. *Message Creator* will create and compact an executable file for you.

Tips and tricks

Here's an entry from the recent competition. The program is called RESTORE/RUN and, as the name might imply, it allows you to run BASIC programs once they have loaded by simply pressing the RESTORE key, saving you from having to type 'RUN [CR]' each time you load a program.

```
* Kyle Arnold, Heathridge, WA
10 POKE 55,255 : POKE 56,127
20 POKE 51,255 : POKE 52,127
30 POKE FOR X=32768 TO 32788 : READ Y : POKE X,Y : NEXT
40 DATA 18,128,9,128,195,194,205,56,48
50 DATA 32,94,166,32,142,166,76
60 DATA 174,167,76,18,128
70 :
80 :
90 REM  RESTORE/RUN BY KYLE ARNOLD
99 REM      19 JUNE 1991
```

That's it from me for another month. As usual I want to hear from YOU. Questions, complaints, programs and anything else can be directed to me care of:

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Computer Man

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The Geos Column

by Andrew Leniart

There are two interfaces available to us with the Amiga. Workbench - with it's extensive use of icons and the Command Line Interface (CLI) which we are mainly on about here. There is little doubt about which is the more powerful interface, but sometimes it's just plain easier to use the Workbench to achieve something that you want to do. In that type of situation, it would be crazy not to take advantage of Workbench. Why walk when you can ride? The trick is being able to determine quickly when it's best to use either method.

This month we'll be looking at Workbench equivalents to the CLI and how we go about determining the best time to use which method to do something.

If your typing is not the best and you are still rather slow, looking for a letter before you can press it, then it would be far easier to flick behind the CLI to Workbench and copy a directory over by dragging its drawer icon across, if it has one, rather than having to type in and correct spelling mistakes in the CLI.

Before we can work out that something like that is possible, we need to be able to quickly recognise when in the CLI if the directory we wish to copy does indeed have an icon for it. Just look for a file name that is identical in name, but with an extension of '.info' on the end of it. If it's there, then there is an icon for it.

By the same token, any drawer or program that you can see on the Workbench will have at least two file names for it in the CLI. So "clock" on your Workbench disk in the utilities drawer will consist of the file names CLOCK - which is the actual program, and CLOCK.INFO, which is the Workbench icon that you see. Delete the Clock.info file and you can still use the program from the CLI, but it will no longer be visible on the Workbench. Try it and see

Terminology

Here is a basic list of terminology often used for particular types of icons and processes on Workbench and what their equivalents could be when working in the CLI. When you open up a disk on Workbench and see a whole stack of drawers or programs there ready to be run or opened, then you are actually looking at the ROOT (main or top) directory of that disk, if you were to pop it into a drive and do a DIR on it in the CLI.

If there is a notepad project icon in the utilities drawer of your Workbench disk called README and you were to double click it, notepad would load up and display the 'ReadMe' file. To do the same in the CLI would require the following command:

DF0:Utilities/Notepad ReadMe

If you wish to copy something from one disk to another, you would use the COPY command in the CLI. The same thing can be achieved by simply dragging the program's icon from its disk window to the window of the disk you wish to copy it to. This can be a considerably quicker method if the program you are copying is imbeded in 2 or 3 directories from the root.

To move a file or program from one directory to another requires the use of the RENAME command. When icons are present, the same result can be achieved simply by dragging the appropriate icons from one drawer to another on the Workbench.

Copying a whole disk in the CLI requires the use of the DISKCOPY command. However if you have two drives, then all you need do is drag the disk's icon that you want to copy on top of the destination drive's disk icon and away you go.

Formatting

Formatting a disk requires the FORMAT command. The same process can be achieved on Workbench by clicking once on the disk icon that is to be formatted and selecting the INITIALIZE option from the Workbench pull down menu's.

You can use MAKEDIR to create new directories on your disks and move files (or programs) into the new directories by using the RENAME command in the CLI. Sometimes it is a quicker to duplicate the Empty drawer on your Workbench, rename it via the pull down menus and drag the appropriate icons into the draw. If you want to put directories within

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directories, then this too is possible simply by dragging one draw on top of another on Workbench. A lot of the time, I like to use a combination of both Workbench and CLI to perform tasks like this.

Multitasking in the CLI is achieved by using the RUN command when starting programs and then firing up another from the same CLI. The equivalent to this in Workbench is simply clicking on one icon, waiting for that program to start, and then clicking on another.

Probably the most confusing aspect for most people when trying to use both CLI and Workbench in any one session is being able to recognise what's what and where. Well, it's mainly a trick of just getting used to it I suppose. Perhaps the following list may help some ...

A DRAWER icon on Workbench is a DIRECTORY in the CLI which stems from the root directory of that disk. The root directory - as mentioned before - is the disks main window when opened up on Workbench.

A PROJECT icon like the ones created by notepad when you save a file is actually represented as a filename in the CLI.

A TOOL icon that runs a program like "clock" is simply the PROGRAM itself when in the CLI.

So that's about the size of it. It's useful to be able to take full advantage of everything your machine offers. There isn't much point in buying an Amiga and then using it strictly like you would an IBM clone by avoiding Workbench like the plague. By the same token, people that avoid CLI and 'just' use Workbench will never be able to access the full power of the little beast which they own.

Experiment with both and get to know what everything is in it's own environment. Once your familiar with it, you'll find yourself flicking between the Workbench and CLI when it suits you - which in turn makes your computing much more enjoyable.

THIRD PARTY UTILITIES

CLI and Workbench users alike have an array of programs, games and utilities available to them which have been written by enthusiasts who have kindly put

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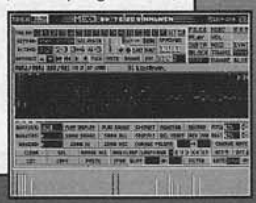

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them into the public domain libraries. Quite a few of these are useful to the CLI user which is why I've decided to cover some of them in this column. One particular program which I enjoy and use to death is a program by the name of *AutoCLI* by Nic Wilson. This program is great and makes bringing up a CLI so easy that you will probably never need to double click on a CLI icon again.

Here is a quick run down on what it does once installed:

It gives you the ability to open up a CLI - anytime - simply with the press of two keys on the keyboard. It also speeds up your pointer so that moving around the screen becomes a breeze. It will also blank the screen for you. Mouse blanking is also another feature which is handy when writing text files - as the pointer disappears as soon as you press a key. No more need to click on back and front gadgets in the Workbench as you can move and shuffle windows and screens by the press of a couple of pre-defined keys - plus a whole host of other features to boot. All of the options can be turned on or off to your own preference, again with the simple press of a couple of keys.

Where do you get it?

You can get this fab little piece of software direct from the author - Nic Wilson - by writing to him direct at:

Nic Wilson Software
138d South Street
Toowoomba QLD 4350

Alternatively, grab copy of a PD disk that has the program on it. Write to a PD distributor such as Prime Artifax (08) 879 7455 or Megadisc (02) 959 3692 and ask for a catalogue disk of all their PD and find it that way. At the same time, you can see all the other disks available with similar free utilities and games. It should also be available on bulletin boards. It's here on mine (Andy's Attic!) if you can't find it on the BBS's that you most often call.

Making it work

Installing *AutoCli* is truly simplicity itself. Just copy it into your C directory and that's about it. Open up a CLI in the normal way and type in *AutoCLI* and away you go.

Press the left - Amiga + escape and you will see what I meant about the ease of getting a CLI up and running. Now if we needed to do that every time we wanted to get it running in the background then it would soon become a bit of a pain. So the best idea is to stick it into your startup-sequence. Then it's always there. Here's how to do it:

Fire up your favorite text editor and load up your disks startup-sequence.

ie: Using Ed, you would type in a CLI:
ED DF0:s/startup-sequence

Make a blank line somewhere before the LoadWb command in the file and type in the following line:

AUTOCLI -f -w -n -m -b -q 1000

That's it! Save your modified startup sequence and reboot your machine. Now you can get a CLI or shell at any time simply by holding down the left Amiga key and pressing the escape key. The above command line will enable all of *AutoCLI's* options. Pressing the left Amiga key and the help key will bring up a window that will allow you to switch off the ones you don't want with your mouse. Read the doc's that accompany the program for more information on all the switches and simply edit your startup-sequence again and remove the ones you don't need

That's just one of the utilities available from the PD libraries to make life easier for you when working with the CLI. In future instalments, you can look forward to others that are useful being covered here as well.

Till the next time... ❑

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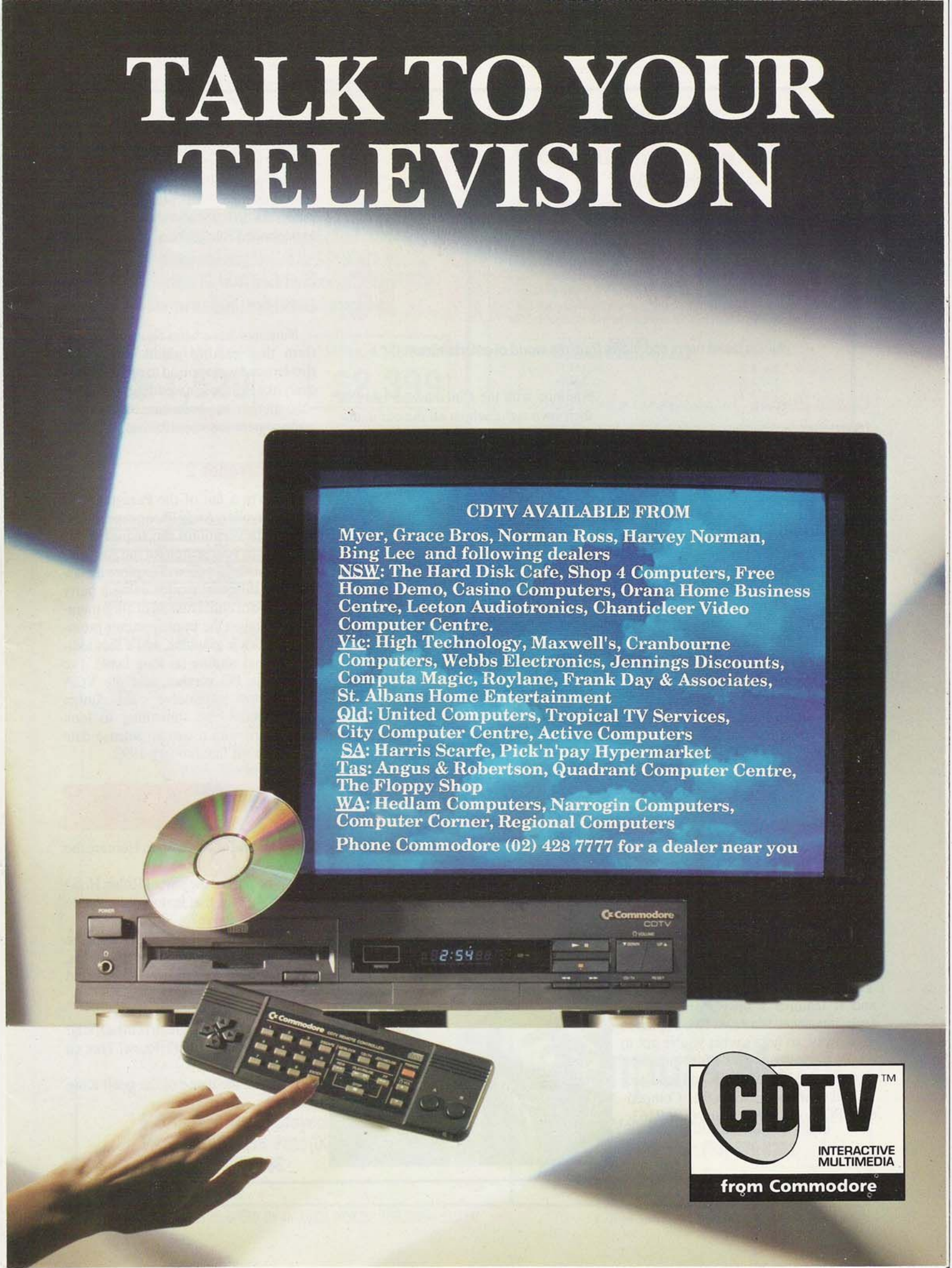

Phil Campbell's MEGA Entertainment

All the latest news and views from the world of entertainment

Chaos Engine from the Bitmap

Roving reporter Andrew Gormly has been nosing around again - this time he's discovered what's cooking with the Bitmap Brothers. *The Chaos Engine* is set in Victorian England after a global catastrophe. The game will involve you guiding around a party of characters in search of a deranged, out-of-control computer called simply "The Engine". Of course, the Engine doesn't wish to be short-wired and has dispatched a multitude of evil men, machines and mutants to stop you. Sounds great!

Cinemaware update

Mirrorsoft has announced that it will continue with the Cinemaware label in their own right, whilst all the old members of the team who came up with the classic Cinemaware games will continue under a new name, Acme Interactive. (I always knew those guys watched too many Bugs Bunny cartoons ...)

Gates of Dawn from Mindscape

Mindscape have just released *Fate - Gates of Dawn*, a new RPG for the Amiga. A sorcerer from a parallel world has cast a spell on you, and now you're trapped in his world - a world that's a strange blend of fairy tales, fantasy and reality. The game features four different cities, each with up to 7 levels and 12 dungeons, with up to 10,000 rooms each. Sounds incredible, but there's more. There are 500 intelligent opponents to deal with, and they all behave differently - they've got unique personalities, and you have to treat them like "real" people. The game retails for $79.95, and should appeal to experienced role players.

Sierra and Broderbund un-merge

Rumours have been flying back and forth that gaming giants Sierra and Broderbund were poised to merge. However, like Primrose's wedding, it's all off - the merger has been cancelled due to management incompatibilites.

Megatraveller 2

If you're a fan of the Paragon RPG MegaTraveller, Andy Phang reports that the Amiga version of the sequel is due out soon! In your search for the Artifacts of the Ancients, you will explore a massive 117 different worlds using a party comprised of either human or alien members. Amongst the improvements promised are better graphics, and a less tedious combat routine (at long last!). I've played the PC version, and the VGA graphics are impressive - the Amiga version should be something to look forward to, with a current release date scheduled for late January 1992.

Mindscape "Robin Hood" competition

"Robin Hood, Robin Hood, riding through the glen, Robin Hood, Robin Hood with his band of men, Feared by the Bad, loved by the good, Robin Hood, Robin Hood, Robin Hood". Remember that little ditty? If you do, you've got every chance of winning a copy of Mindscape's newest and nicest game. Yep, it's *Robin Hood*, it's for the Amiga, and it features a nifty *PowerMonger* style interface. We have five copies to give away, so here's what you've got to do. Write your answers to the questions on the back of an envelope, and send it to:

Phil Campbell, November Competition, PO Box 23, Maclean NSW 2463

before the end of November. Here are the questions...

1. Who played the part of Robin Hood in the TV series that featured the theme song printed above?
2. Name three other actors who have played the part of Robin Hood in movies.
3. Name the fat guy, the big guy and the bad guy.
4. Where does Robin hail from?
5. What variety of green is the official colour of Robin's outfit? (Phew! That's a hard one!)
6. What's the name of the good King in exile?

ACAR entertainment hints disk

If you haven't got your copy of the ACAR entertainment hints disk yet, why not? It's crammed full of handy hints and cheats in an attractive and easy to access format - to get a copy, send a blank disk, a cheque for $5.00, and a stamped, self addressed envelope to: Phil Campbell, PO Box 23, Maclean NSW 2463.

Mindscape September competition winners

The September "Logical Scramble" competition was almost impossible to judge. The rules were simple enough - just scramble the letters of "logical scramble" to make a logical sentence. But the problem is, who decides what a logical sentence looks like? The answer is - me. And in this case, it wasn't easy!

Congratulations to the following three readers who have each won a copy of the Commodore 64 version of *Logical* courtesy of Mindscape:

K. Watson of Strathmore, Vic, with "Log all Cab crimes," a logical enough thing for the police to say to the Cab Despatcher, I guess.

Shelley Duval, of Hamilton Hill WA offers "Go cable all crims" - another cops'n'robbers style comment.

Norma Pearce of Tarro, NSW comes in third with "A girl calls me Bo." I can't imagine why she would, but Norma just scrapes in. (Bad luck to K. Blackburn, whose "Girls call me Bo" is slightly more logical, but has one less letter! Better luck next time!)

The two Amiga version winners are:

Mr T. Ponsaing, of Armidale, NSW, who sent a total of 21 sentences using all 15 letters, as well as a pile of answers using 14 and 13 letters.

Second place goes to another entry that offered quantity if not quality - Mr L. Far of Riverstone, NSW.

Congratulations to the winners, and thanks to Mindscape for the prizes. ❑

Amiga HINTS & TIPS

Andrew Gormly sent a heap of handy hints on disk. In return, he received a free copy of the ACAR Hints Disk. The same thing could happen to you! Simply send your Amiga hints to:

Phil Campbell
PO Box 23
MACLEAN NSW 2463

Send them on paper and you'll get nothing but fame and glory. Send them on disk with a stamped, self addressed envelope, and you'll get your disk back loaded with goodies! (Plus the fame and glory!). Meanwhile, back to Andrew's hints...

Back to the Future Part III

When the story board is showing type in:

ROTTEN CHEAT for Level 1,

LOUSY CHEAT for Level 2, and (even worse!)

LOW DOWN CHEAT for Level 3.

Who says computer programmers have no imagination?

Brat

A few level codes...

Level 1	BISHIGMO
Level 2	MIHEMOTO
Level 3	SASUTOZO
Level 4	SUMATZEE
Level 5	NOKITAGO
Level 6	ITSANONO (is it?!)
Level 7	MOZIMATO
Level 8	HOZITOMO
Level 9	MOKITEMO

Turrican II

"Isn't it incredible how things go right sometimes," says Andrew - "My cousin just rang three seconds ago to tell a new *Turrican II* cheat he'd discovered! Here it is...before I've even tried it..." Press Help to select a tune, select tune 1, press 4, then 2, then Escape twice for infinite lives. Rad!

Horror Zombies From the Crypt

Here are the codes to get you to Level 6...

Level 2	WOLFMAN
Level 3	HAMMER
Level 4	LUGOSI
Level 5	NOSFERATU
Level 6	GARLIC

And type BOGEYMAN for infinite lives...

Prince of Persia

Hold down Caps Lock and press L to skip levels - but be warned, this won't work for level 1.Z-Out Press J and K simultaneously for infinite lives.

Cartridge capers

Here are some cheats for Action Replay users, courtesy of Bill Holder of West Perth, WA...

Defender of the Crown
016A8F - Gold
0179E1 - Soldiers

Giana Sisters
008178 - Lives (0-99)
00817A - Time

Eagles Nest
C09977 - Ammunition
C09979 - Hits

Wonderboy in Monsterland
00A2C0 - Money
00A2C1 - Money

Hybris
00478A - Expansions
008712 - Lives (use the TFO command for an interesting result)

PP Hammer
012F95 - Lives
012F96 - Time (0-255)
012F97 - Time (256-512) ❑

IMMORTALITY or how to live forever in games!

Yep, it's sunny November and all of our readers have died of skin cancer. They haven't? Well, send me some tips then! Here's some now:

Forgotten Worlds

Boy, did this game have a bad case of hype. One of the largest bloopers ever! All of the U.K. mags rated it highly and remarked on its originality, but it turned out to be an average shoot-em-up. Well, as Public Enemy says - "Don't believe the hype!". Now for some anonymous pokes, reset the compie and type:

POKE 3273,181
POKE 25537,181
POKE 33953,181
POKE 35687,165
POKE 52038,181
SYS 13695

Xenon

The game that made the Bitmap Brothers famous. A hallmark in Amiga excellence at the time, it has long lost its appeal nowadays. The C64 conversion was not coded by the Bitmaps, and definitely had a bad case of the conversion blues (and believe me, blue is the word!). Okay, for infinite lives (I think), reset the game and type:

POKE 26356,173
SYS 20048

The Final Attack

Heh, if you're unfortunate enough to have bought this game or any other game made on SEUCK, I have pity on you. I should know how terrible they truly are, because I wrote this one! The horrible truth revealed, exclusive to ACAR!!! Yeah, well if you have any ideas about getting a SEUCK game published, forget it. No-one will publish them anymore! Ok, here's a universal infinite lives poke for all SEUCK games:

POKE 19214,0
SYS 16992

Cauldron II

Palace have released many lurvely original games, and this one is no exception. *Cauldron* was a better game in my opinion, with what must have been the first parallax scrolling ever! Still, both games are amazing value nowadays being reincarnated as budget titles. Shame is, I have no idea what this poke does!

POKE 36152,255
SYS 32777

Dropzone

Archer Maclean was really ahead of his time. This game still beats other clones of that classic game *Defender*. Archer went on to code such greats as *International Karate+*. Well, if you want 255 bombs reset and type:

POKE 2316,255
SYS 1006

Samurai Warrior

Since I last gave you lot tips for this game, I've found out that it is nothing like the *Turtles* game. It is, in fact, rather good. Especially for the time that it was written. For ininite Usagis, type HHDSFHHH on the high scores table.

Operation Wolf

Woof, woof, woof! SCREEEEECH! Splat! My god, this wolf needs an operation!!! Erm, sorry about that. *Operation Wolf* is the best first-person perpective shoot-em on the C64. Well, if you don't include the tunnel part on *Platoon*, that is. Hmmm, if you wanna cheat as much as possible on this mindless kill-em-up, reset and type:

POKE 34952,165 - Infinite bombs
POKE 35103,165 - Infinite bullets
POKE 35107,173 - Infinite cartridges
POKE 36007,165 - Infinite time.
SYS 16960

Motor Mania

This is one of those early C64 games that we would all like to forget. But, as it is my duty to convey any pokes that are sent to me unto you, I will print anything. So, here is the poke:-POKE 8646,255 - For infinite cars.SYS 8000

The Last V8

This game went under many cosmetic changes to get CODEMASTERS up and running. They have proved to be one of the best budget companies in the U.K. and I feel can be pardoned for the appalling number of 'Simulators' that they have produced. Well, if you want an unlimited number of V8's, reset the computer and type:

POKE 7858,173
POKE 7149,173
POKE 7326,173
SYS 3328

Commando

This game has to be one of the best *Commando* clones of all time! It is *Commando*? Well, that explains it then. Seriously though, this is one of the best vertically scrolling soldier shoot-ems of all time. A must for anyone that is a *Rambo* fan:

POKE 14631,0 - For infinite commandos.

POKE 16432,96 - To increase the speed of your commando.

SYS 2128

Road Runner

VROOOOOOMMMM! ME MEEP! BLOOP BLOOP! No, I'm not the Road Runner, but I may be a relative (gibber...). This is definitely one of the best coin-op conversions from US GOLD, and a must for any road runner fans. These pokes allow you to move anywhere on the screen, and if you run along the bottom of the screen the computer thinks that you are picking up seed so you can get thousands of points and loadsa extra lives!

POKE 52413,76
POKE 52414,203
POKE 52415,204
SYS4126

The Empire Strikes Back

This is one of my three most favourite films ever, the *Star Wars* trilogy! I have some very good news concerning *Star Wars*. Geogre Lucas (that's how it's spelt!) is planning to have the next three in the series out during the next five years!

The next three are actually prequels explaining the origins of the Jedis, and the life of Luke's father. It looks like it is going to be even bigger than the original trilogy, so watch out for it! This game, however, is not so hot...

During the game hold down the space bar along with the B, N, M, J, K and L keys. The game should pause, so press RUN/STOP to get into the action again with unlimited shield strength.

Hawkeye

THE BOYS WITHOUT BRAINS certainly didn't get their name from this magnificent product. This game has a spectacular parallax scroll, and large detailed sprites, things not commonly found in the games of that time. THE BOYS WITHOUT BRAINS have long since broken up and gone their separate ways, with the graphics man going on to do the graphics of the fabulous *Flimbo's Quest*.

Here's some magnificent pokes for this magnificent game:

POKE 6105,189 - Unlimited weaponry

POKE 7468,173 - Unlimited lives

SYS 23558

Well, I'm afraid that's all for this time, so I'm outta here! Send your tips to me care of:

SLARTIBARTFAST
4 O'Connor Dr.
Bray Park, NSW 2484. ❑

Entertainment Letters

A happy customer

Dear Phil, I have just moved to Perth from Sydney, and imagine my surprise when I visited my local Commodore retailer. He had the Action Replay Mk II cartridge for the lowly price of $165 - in other words, $100 less than in Sydney. It was the same at other shops I visited. Public domain disks are cheaper here too. Why?

Changing the subject a little, I also want to heap praise on Tim Strachan at Megadisc. In June I ordered six disks from him. I faxed the order on Wednesday, and the disks arrived on Thursday! What service! Thanks Tim. In closing, ACAR is a brilliant magazine, and has been since the early days of the C-64. Keep up the good work.

Bill Holder
West Perth WA

Ed: *It's a rare treat to read a letter full of so much good news! Make the most of the cheaper prices you're finding in WA - must be a bonus for living so far from the rest of the civilised world! As for your comments about Tim at Megadisc, you're absolutely right. My experience has been exactly the same. Tim's one of the unsung heroes of the Amiga community, and he deserves everyone's support. Thanks for your comments on ACAR too - we'll do our best to keep it up. And, of course, to get better!*

Another Millennium

Dear Phil, In response to the letter from Doug Ghiggioli in the last issue of ACAR about the sequel to *Millennium 2.2* - yes, there is one! It's called *Deuteros - The Next Millenium*. Set 1000 years after the original game, a rogue asteroid has wiped out the entire human race, except for a small colony living on the moon. And if that wasn't enough, an alien invasion force is planning to attack! A British magazine reviewed *Deuteros* recently, and gave it a healthy 89%, so it should satisfy Doug's hunger for colonisation quite nicely.

Steve Williams
Toowong Qld

Ed: *Thanks for taking the time to write, Steve. Hopefully an Australian distributor will send us a review copy soon!*

And yet another Millenium

Dear Phil, Re: Doug Ghiggioli's question in the September issue of ACAR... yes, there is a sequel to *Millenium 2.2*. It's called *Deuteros*, and it's awesome!

Michael Harvey
Gold Coast, Qld

Amiga buyer

Dear Phil, What are *Lotus Esprit* and *Ivan Stewart's Off Road Racing* like on the Commodore 64? Which do you think is best? Also, I was thinking of getting an Amiga 500 but decided to consult you first. I would use the Amiga mostly for games. Which do you think is best - an Amiga, or a disk drive for my Commodore 64?

Michael Bradley
Urunga, NSW

Ed: *Mmmm. Whichever way you go you'll find life is much improved! The step up to a disk drive when you're used to cassette software is fantastic. But the step up to an Amiga 500 is even better. So if you can afford the Amiga, go for it!*

I haven't tried the two games you mentioned on a C-64, but on the Amiga I prefer Lotus Esprit - *mainly because I don't really like view from the top racing games like* Ivan Stewart. *Mind you, if you're good at that sort of game (like* Super-Cars*) and if you don't get confused with the joystick controls,* Off Road Racing *is one of the best in the class.*

Game plans

Dear Phil, I'm writing to you with my High Score for *SWIV*, which I have completed. It's a superb game, and I'm wondering if there are any plans for a sequel?

I'm also interested to know if *Elite Plus* (of which I've seen a PC version) will be available for the Amiga sometime in the future? If so, will saved games from the current version of *Elite* be able to be transferred over? Finally, congratulations on what is probably the best computer magazine in Australia.

Michael Gane
Stawell, Vic

Ed: *Rumour has it that the PC version of* Elite Plus *simply upgrades the PC version to the same standard as the current Amiga version, with filled vector objects instead of wireframes and other similar upgrades. In this case, don't expect an Amiga version! However, rumours have been known to be wrong before! As for a sequel to* SWIV, *Mindscape have no news from The Sales Curve at present (they're the software house who programmed* SWIV*), though Richard Treloggan says he "wouldn't be surprised".*

Not so smart

Dear Phil, In *Future Wars* I can get into the secret room with the machine that's like a photocopier, but then the only thing I can do is put the paper in the hole, and press the red and green buttons. At this point someone always comes in and shoots me. What do I do?

Shane Smart
Pt Augusta SA

Ed: *Whatever you do, Shane, don't panic. Just keep an eye on ACAR over the next few months, and you're bound to find an answer from another smart reader.*

Impossible Mission - impossible?

Dear Phil, I'm having trouble with a couple of games - *Impossible Mission II* and *Labyrinth*, both for the Commodore 64. In *Impossible Mission II*, I can collect all the music from the eight towers and search everything well within the time, but I can't work out how to get out of the last tower. In *Labyrinth*, can someone please help me enter the Goblin Castle. I have rescued Ludo from the Goblins, and he has come across the bridge with me. Any help with these games would be greatly appreciated.

I think your mag is great, especially because it caters for the C-64, and there aren't many mags around that do that anymore.

Jacki Hogansen
Katoomba, NSW

Ed: *Someone must be able to help this damsel in distress. There should be plenty of* Impossible Mission II *fans around, 'cause it has to be one of the best games ever made, on any computer!*

Hall of Fame

Send your authentic high scores to Phil Campbell, PO Box 23 Maclean NSW 2463. Please mark clearly whether your scores are for C-64 or Amiga. And remember NO CHEAT MODES ALLOWED!

AMIGA

ACTION FIGHTER 132,530 R. Baker
ALERT 359,700 R. Baker
ARKANOID 1,052,610 S. Walter
AMAZED 130,500 Chris Turnadge
BAAL 134,250 Davo
B. COMMAND 334,200 P. Cain
B. SQUADRON 99 mill. A. Burbidge
B. ICE PAL. 67,626 C. Turnadge
BIO CHALL 29,000 A. Sanderson
BLOCKOUT 85,281 Stephen Lark
BOMBJACK 236,430 Steven Walter
BUBBLE + 276,850 (c) Chris Toyne
B. BOBBLE 1,925,070 R. Baker
BUGGY BOY 103,350 D.Thompson
CAR-VUP 484,122 Happy Hacker
CHASE HQ 5,504,010 A. Augostis
CONT. CIRCUS 4,815,390 Dolly
C. CARS 86,547,220(c) A. Wade
C. CARS CHALL 3 bill. M. Summers
C. HAMMER 43,847 D. Thompson
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DENARIS 53,900 P. Evans
DIABLO 1,490 T. Johnson
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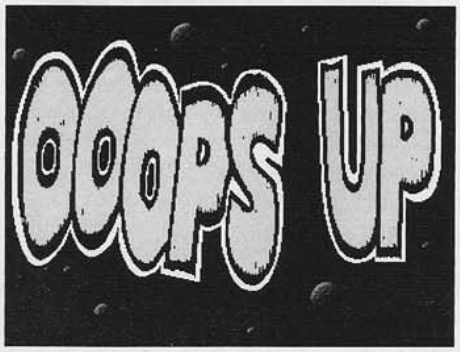
EDD THE DUCK 5,820 A. Gormly
ELIMINATOR 246,570 G. Munro
E. MINE Level 23 (d) T. Johnson
FLOOD 6,455 E. Beaton
G. B. AIR RALLY 307,466 K. Andy
GIANA SISTERS 56,567 M. Keath
GODS 2,429,817 (c) J. Stone
GOLDEN AXE 43.6 G. Wilson
HYBRIS 1,826,075 E. Beaton
IK+ 189,900 D. Carsburg
IMP. MISSION 66,380 D. Unwin
I. JONES L.C. completed P. Nicoll
INDI 500 38.53sec/233.58 mph Dolly
INERTIA DRIVE 18,790 T. Johnson
K. KID II 54,000 M. Summers
KLAX 4,396,040 H. Hacker
L'NECK 86,500 S. Crosland
LIVE & LET DIE 96,520 M. Beaton
M. MOTION 50,658 O. Webster
MENACE 996,481 K. Andy
M'WALKER 306,214 P.Schumacher
MOUSETRAP 71,977 D. Rich
NARC 180,800 D. Carsburg
N. MISSION 35,141 A. Sanderson
NITRO 261,000 (c) D. Carsburg
N. Z. STORY 546,695 E. Beaton
ONSLAUGHT 16,179 A. Gormly
OPER. T'BOLT 53,000 A. Gormly
OUTRUN 26,331,122(c) B. Moen
O. WARRIOR 626,345 J. Booth
PACMANIA 3,250,140(c)A. Burbidge
P. MAGIC 332,390 T. Chilcott
P. WIZARD 1,029,360 G. Stone
P. PLAGUE 35,412 K. Sooby
PLUTOS 299,000 Davo
POPULOUS 347,990 M. Summers
POW 612,865 D. Thompson
R. ISLANDS 9 mill. (c) T. Johnson
RAMPAGE 504,175 G. Wilson
R. DANGEROUS II 25,470A.Gormly
ROBOCOP 375,520 M. Summers
ROTOX 183,050(c) F. Doherty
SIDEWINDER 904,350 S. E. Eades
S'WORM (Heli) 4,079,300 Iceman
SI'WORM (Jeep) 622,500 D. Everton
SKWEEK 3,375,400 F. Doherty
SPACE ACE 22,140 N. Clarke
S. HARRIER 210,855,250 Maverick
SPEEDBALL 17,650 A. Burbidge
S'WARS 5,722,822 C. Mingos
STRIDER 175,350 N. Young
S. CARS 17 races Maverick
S. HANG-ON 25,042,850 D. Worthy
S. OFF-ROAD $350,000 A. Gormly
S. W'BOY 87,190J.Stubbings
SWIV (HELI) 1,536,620(c) M. Gane
SWIV (JEEP) 75,390 A. Gormly
S. OF SODAN 403,500 S. Begley
T.M.N.T. 546,600J. Leeken
TEST DRIVE 131,076(c) J. Noglet
T. DRIVE 2 659,992 M. Summers
TETRIS 35,920 M. Summers
TETRIX Level 232 S. Lark
T'BLADE 336,520 R. Matthews
T'CATS 522,300 S. Southurst
T. OF BABEL 25,934 (c) S. Lark
T. OUTRUN 100,260,819 M. Mantle
TURRICAN 1,735,100 (c) A. Jenkin
TURRI II 2,585,700 (c) M. Diggens
TV B'BALL 176-60 D. McKinney
TV FOOTBALL 189-0 D. McKinney
TWINWORLD 24,640 C. Love
TYPHOON 54,255 O. Webster
VIRUS 16,576 M. Summers
WHIRLIGIG 28,210 N. Allen
WINGS 426 kills J. Main
W. BOY 291,350 Maverick
XENON II 1,107,280M. Porta
ZOOM 67,051 S. Jones

COMMODORE 64

ALLEY CAT 1,101,150 S. Mitchell
A. BEAST 251,250(c) A. Blanch
BATMAN 473,230 J. Nunes
B'MAN-MOVIE 1,087,080 M. Bradley
B. KNIGHTS 39,600 J. Smith
B. JACK 521,820 A. Wade
B. BOBBLE 6,963,930 D. Gavrilovic
B. BOY(c) 153,000 A. Wade
CHASE HQ 11,366,900H. Hacker
D. DRAGON 35,820 (c) A. Prasad
D. DRAGON II 255,190 N.Heeswyk
D. BREED 496,870 H. Hacker
FAST BREAK 136 to 9 C. Byrne
GHOST& GOBLIN32,050 A. Annen
GHOUL & GHOST87,050 A. Blanch
G. SISTERS 121,390(c) H. Hacker
GRYZOR 211,200 G. Aslett
H. MARA Level M N. Heeswyk
HAWKEYE 207,650 A. Wade
I. WARRIORS 267,800(c) Iceman
INT. KARATE 139,300 P. Millward
LAST NINJA II 21m30s (c) D. Carter
M. RESISTANCE 28,540 (c) D. Pike
NEMESIS 1,157,300 S. Mitchell
O. WOLF 776,350 W. Diaz
OUTRUN 15,848,550 G. Aslett
PARADROID 32,250 S. Mitchell
PAPERBOY 103,100(c) J. Nunes
PIRATES 109/100 A. Annen
POWERDRIFT 840,290 G. Aslett
QUE-DEX 639 C. Byrne
R-TYPE 1,890,210 A. Prasad
R. ISLANDS 2,233,820 A. Wade
RAMPAGE 120,300 G. Aslett
R. DANGEROUS 66,280 A. Annen
ROBOCOP 237,170(c) A. Wade
R. THUNDER 441,430S.Learmonth
S'MANDER 235,300 P. Millward
SHINOBI 664,372(c) W. Diaz
S'WORM (Heli) 965,200 A. Blanch
S'WORM (Jeep) 244,500 A. Blanch
S. FIGHTER(c)168,900 A. Wade
S. CYCLE 223,040 A. Gormly
T. RENEGADE 330,450 C. Byrne T.
DRIVE 36,144(c) J. Nunes
T. DRIVE II 249,543 (c) A. Batroc
TETRIS 25,706 A. Batroc
THE TRAIN 9,500(c) A. Annen
T. BLADE 1,734,040 T. Morrison
THUNDERCATS 269,500 J. Wright
T.M.N TURTLES 878 A. Wade
TRAZ 54,560 D. & S. Upton
UNT'ABLES 70,230 S.Watford
WIZBALL 607,420 (c) S. Mitchell
WONDERBOY 560,320 H. Hacker

Scores followed by (c) indicate that the game has been completed.

Feel like a jolly good time?* Greg Munro *finds a game that's lots of fun ...



I've just been rolling on the floor in laughter, along with a roomful of hysterical friends. This is one great game for social interaction!

Sometimes the simplest games are the best. *Ooops-Up* is largely a combination of two simple and primeval game patterns. The first is the *Space Invaders* principle - you shoot upwards, and what you are shooting comes downwards. The second pattern is the *Asteroids* principle - what you shoot splits into smaller and smaller bits which rebound everywhere and kill you when you touch them.

The graphics are good, but not outstanding. The background is a randomly chosen planetscape. In the foreground are bouncing spheres that look like little cratered moons, and your intrepid space traveller, who is looking for the 99 parts of his spaceship. Yes, there are 99 levels! At the end of each, you get the code for the next level.

The spacemen move sideways, climb ladders, and shoot upwards at the bouncing asteroids, which divide when hit. Some asteroids produce icons which give extra weapons or a shield, freeze the asteroids for some seconds, or simply kill you. As well as asteroids, you also have to dodge the occasional alien greeblie trundling along the surface, or alien ships flying down from above. On top of all this you have a time limit.

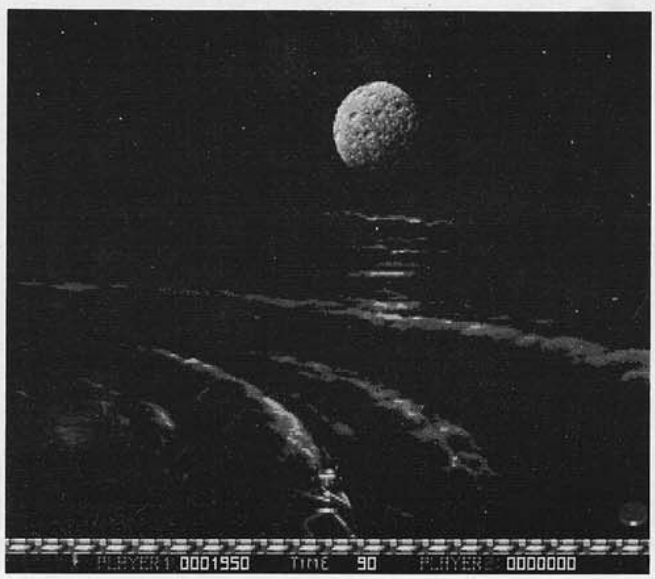
This is a classic arcade style game. Fast and furious, frustrating and addictive. Unfortunately it's just as unforgiving as an arcade machine too - when you die you start a level all over again, even if you had almost completed it. Three strikes and you're out. At first I thought it was just too ridiculously hard, but after some perseverance I managed to finish level one and get the first piece of the spaceship. After that I was hooked.

There were a few things I didn't like. First the music. It had to happen I suppose - at last rap music has hit the small screen. Logical really. Since rap works by endlessly repeating the same mindless phrase, it's perfect for background music in a mindless computer game! The mindless phrase in this case is 'Ooops, up, say ooops ooops up...' followed by four more unintelligible syllables which sound like either 'Soccer today' or 'sock it to death'. The quality of the digitised soundtrack is superb (unfortunately for those of us who can't stand rap!). You may choose to turn the music off, but since this also turns off the sound, this is not a viable option. This is a very annoying design fault!

Whilst on annoying faults, the most glaring omission is a pause function. To be able to pause this type of game is essential, especially if you don't have a telephone answering machine! Besides, how else can you cheat? Also, there's too much disk accessing and needless returning to unnecessary screens between games. It takes more than 30 seconds to reload after each failed game. There is no escape function either, so if you choose the wrong level by mistake, you have to go through the whole rigmarole of playing the game and getting killed three times before you can get to the level you really wanted.

Well, now that the gripes are out of the way, what's good about this game? It's simply a lot of fun to play, especially with friends. The two player option is a team game, where both players appear on the screen at once. You work out strategies for each level, back each other up, and pay out on each other for failing to do so. It's always good to find a game which actually encourages social interaction instead of destroying it. It's almost impossible to complete some levels by yourself. After several weeks of dual gameplay, I've actually managed to gain the access code for level 99, but I'm sure it would take much longer with one player. Even when you eventually get through the last level, there's still the challenge of trying for a high score.

Anyway, if you like mindless action games that will give you a lot of laughs with your friends, this one's worth buying, despite the rap music. Now ... where's that code for level 99? Just one last try before bed ... ❑



Ratings:

Graphics:	70%
Sound:	60%
Music:	I hate rap.
Playability:	75%
Addictiveness:	90%
Instructions:	Barely needed
Overall value:	70%

Distributed by:
Pactronics
(02) 748 4700

Andy Phang kicks some serious butt as he takes on the latest AD&D epic ...

Secret of the Silver Blades

The third installment in the hugely successful Advanced Dungeons and Dragons line, *Silver Blades* has finally made its way onto the Amiga. This time, your party has been magically transported to a remote mining town called New Verdigris. After you awaken (completely naked, I might add - no matter how you travel, you can be sure that your luggage will be lost along the way!), the Mayor of New Verdigris tells you why you were summoned.

It seems that a group of evildoers called the Black Circle have begun rituals to awaken the Dreadlord, an ancient and powerful nemesis of the Forgotten Realms. When the threat of the Dreadlord arose almost 300 years ago, a group of hardy adventurers known as the Silver Blades defeated the forces of evil and encased the Dreadlord in his castle with a massive ice spell. Now the Black Circle plans to remove that spell, and it is your task to make sure the Dreadlord meets his maker once and for all.

After playing *Silver Blades* for a few hours, you will undoubtedly come to the conclusion that this game is 'more of the same' (in other words, extremely similar to previous AD&D efforts like *Pool of Radiance* and *Azure Bonds*). Therefore, I can tell you now that you will enjoy *Silver Blades* if you enjoyed *Pool* and *Bonds*. The combat is the same, the interface is the same, and the role playing elements in Silver Blades are the same. However, there are a few noticeable improvements in the design of this latest AD&D chapter that makes it slightly better than its predecessors.

Firstly, though the 'graphical look' of the game bears many similarities, there are some new features. These include more colourful and detailed icons, better 2D portraits of enemy monsters, and more of those 'half-screen' pictures that add so much to the story of the game. There is also a larger variety of mazes that you can explore, including the ruins of Verdigris, the mines, the dungeons near the Castle of the Dreadlord, several Giant villages, and the Castle itself. Other neat touches include a difficulty level (varies the number of hit points that the monsters possess, thus making combat easier or harder depending on your tastes), increased automapping, the ability to boost character statistics up to higher levels (thieves can go up to Level 18!), the ability to save AND load your games from any point, lots more subquests and treasure to be found, better weapons and armour, increased spell levels for mages and clerics (which means a few new spells are added to the grimoire), and finally, a satisfyingly reasonable loading time when playing from floppy disk.

The story itself is nothing special (another variant on the 'Kill the Evil Wizard / Tyrant / Dictator / Baddie / Executive / Editor' theme favoured by so many RPGs in the market today), but SSI have managed to include a few more "adventuring" aspects into the game. You must solve a series of riddles, for example, before you can enter the Castle of the Dreadlord. The plot itself is fairly linear: you won't be able to continue with the quest until you successfully complete each previous task.

I would advise RPGers to 'mix' their adventuring party in *Silver Blades.* Try creating a couple of new characters (especially useful are Paladins and Rangers, and dual class characters) while retaining the more powerful fighters and spellcasters from *Azure Bonds*. You will definitely need (at least) one human mage and a human cleric, in order to advance rapidly enough to take advantage of the higher level spells available. Since many of the monsters you meet in *Silver Blades* are tough, the game designers have given 200,000 experience points to each new character created, which will raise the levels of your new characters fairly quickly at the start of the game.

I must admit I enjoyed completing *Silver Blades* for a variety of reasons. It gave me a chance to reacquaint myself with my AD&D characters from *Pool* and *Bonds*; the option of being able to continue adventuring with a party you're familiar with and grown attached (somewhat!) to is a big plus for SSI's AD&D games. Although the game features some incredibly tough opponents, by the time I was halfway through the game my party had become virtually invincible (how, I'm not telling, but I DID NOT use any disk editors or other foul methods!) and it was simply a lot of FUN kicking some serious butt! ❑

Distributed by:
Electronic Arts
(075) 911 388
(new number)
RRPAmiga $59.95
C64 $34.95

Ratings:

Graphics:	80%
Sound:	65%
Gameplay:	85%
Overall:	82%

Juris Graney *battles his way through time in a valiant effort to save the world. Can he do it? Come for a trip through the time zones and find out ...*

Zone Warriors

They came in hordes. Ectoplasmic bug-eyed monsters of all stripes and zoological classifications. They marched, crawled, scurried, and oozed with mindless joy. They carried power tools and used them recklessly. Their creators had lots of fancy, unpronounceable names for them. But to Earth Startroopers, they were all the same, they were... GEEKS.

The year is 2967. For over a decade, the nasty Geek Empire has relentlessly tried to subdue the United People and Other Lifeforms of Earth by every possible means. Now they're staging their most brillant and dangerous attack yet. Using a time machine seized in a recent assault on an Earth space station, they're infiltrating the past in the hope of destroying human history.

Time is of the essence. A single Startrooper must journey back to the past and mend the ruptured fabric of time. That soldier is you - the Zone Warrior! Yes, another game where you get to save the world - in this case, you have to travel through three time zones and stop the Geeks from changing history. In Level One, for example, the date is 8357 B.C. It is up to you to save Ug, the famous inventor of the wheel. The Geeks have captured him, knowing that without his discovery the history of the world would be radically changed.

Your task, if you choose to accept it, is to save Ug and some other hostages. Then on top of that you have to kill the Head Geek, in this case a giant flying lizard.

Zone Warriors is just a basic run around killing everything you can, and stay alive kind of game. As usual in these games, you can collect different weapons, collect points, and most of all collect hostages. You don't have a time limit, but you do have a health and speed measure. If you get hit, your health goes down until it hits 0% and you finally kick the bucket. You have three lives and can collect another life when you reach a certain part of the game. If you're in a tight squeeze and need some help just hit Return and your character speeds up. This is very helpful in the second level when you have to dodge spikes.

In *Zone Warriors*, you can also collect keys to open Special Rooms. There are three Special Rooms and of course three security keys. The rooms are: Armoury - you can collect an extra life here, gain an X-Bomb or be assassinated by a real live geek. The Bod Room - This is where the most prized hostage is kept. Before you can enter here you have to release the hostages set at the start of the game. Finally the Commander's Lair. This is the Geek Commander's Headquarters. This is where the final showdown of each time zone occurs.

Other useful weapons are Mines, X-bombs, a 3-way hyperblaster, seeking missles, flamethrowers and a cluster gun. Each one has its downfalls, but each weapon is excellent to play around with.

When I first looked at *Zone Warriors*, I thought to myself that it would probably be a *Space Harrier* remake, or something like *Predator*. To my astonishment it was nothing like *Space Harrier* or for that matter *Predator*. I really enjoy playing this game because it is interesting, fun to play, and has brilliant music. The only thing I found wrong with it was that it didn't have passwords, so when you finished the first level and died on the second level you had to play the first all over again to get to the second. Otherwise it's a great game. ❑

Ratings:

Graphics:	89%
Sound:	94%
Gameplay:	89%
Overall:	90%

Distributed by:
Electronic Arts
(075) 911 388
RRP $49.95 Amiga

What happens when you ask a hot-blooded gamer to review a cold-blooded strategy game? Hmmm.* Peter Diegutis *didn't enjoy the experience, but you may be different. Read on, as Peter encounters ...

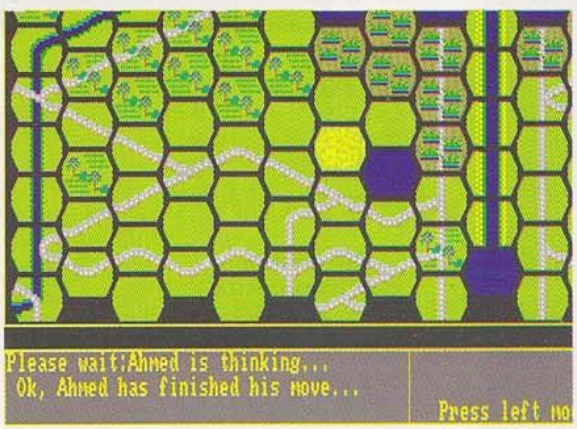
It is quite clear that I would never have become a good general - a platoon commander, perhaps, but not a leader whose success depends on the ability to maintain an over-view of a situation.

In a war game, I am far more interested in the local scene, of actually sitting at the controls of a fighter aircraft in combat, of being the skipper of a bomber during an attack or of commanding a tank in an armoured battle. With this hands-on preference, I would rather lead a platoon or small section of comrades into action where I had control of what is happening amid the noise and excitement of the battle. Sitting in some behind-the-lines dugout manipulating a vast army like some master puppeteer is certainly not to my liking.

That's why the new war game, *Conflict: Middle East*, from Strategic Simulations Inc, is not for me. It's a complicated game offering the player or players an opportunity of directing Arab against Israeli, using the weapons and supplies associated with the Middle East conflict in 1973. It also allows the protagonists to line up against each other as if they were fighting a war in the 1990s.

According to the comprehensive manual, this game requires 1Mb of RAM. I played it on my Amiga 500 which is fitted with a 512Kb RAM expansion card. It will also play on the Amiga 1000 and 2000.

Where two players are involved, they assume the roles of overall military commanders of either the Israeli or Arab-coalition side. When only one player is involved, he assumes the role of military commander of one side or the other and the computer acts as the opponent.



Each commander has military units under his control ranging in size from divisions to companies and includes the ability to manipulate the various aerial forces. Battle plans are drawn up following the consideration of weather, supply and strategic reports, all of which would be available to an army commander.

Intelligence about the size and whereabouts of various units on the field is obtained from a map of the Middle East stretching from Cairo to Damascus and from the Gulf of Suez to the Golan Heights. Units are displayed on the map with the standard NATO military symbols within the cells of a hexagonal grid.

There are a wide variety of options available to players. As an example, the information provided about an opposing unit within one of the cells or 'hexes' will depend on the intelligence level selected at the start of the game. Military forces are allocated points for movement to be spent at various rates as the units move from one hex to another. All the troop units, aircraft, tanks and weapons have specified levels of survivability and vulnerability or deadliness.

These factors are an important part of playing the game and must be considered by any worthwhile commander if he hopes to have any chance of crushing the enemy. But to play *Conflict: Middle East* properly would almost be like attending a maths class at school. You would have to work out all the survival and movement points for your own forces to plan your strategy. In a game, all the tedious calculations of how well a battle has proceeded are worked out for you by the computer.

Rushing in like a bull at a gate is not the right way to play. I did this, moved my forces without consideration of the overall situation and was promptly wiped out by the computer-controlled opposition.

But to me, it was all so slow and boring. There was no graphic display, no show, no lovely aroma of napalm or cordite in the air. *Conflict: Middle East* is not for me. But if you're the sort of person who loves strategy, who'll sit and think out the next 100 moves in a game of chess, you'll probably love it. ❑

Ratings:

Graphics:	0% (Text based)
Sound:	0%
Strategy:	78%
Overall:	60%

Distributed by:
Electronic Arts
(075) 991 388
RRP Amiga $59.95

Strategic genius* Andy Phang *offers us a little Role-Playing history lesson as he files this review of the latest RPG. Or is it the latest? ...

It's a bit unusual for Spotlight Software's *DeathBringer* to suddenly be released this late in 1991, for several reasons. Firstly, it's not a new game at all. In fact, *DeathBringer* is the American title for a British product called *Galdregon's Domain*, which had previously appeared on Amiga software shelves in 1989. Secondly, American publishers Spotlight are (or were?) in fact a subsidiary line of products under the now defunct Cinemaware label. As far as I know, Spotlight has not evolved into a software publisher in its own right, nor has the reincarnation of Cinemaware (under the new banner of Acme Interactive) picked up rights to this and other Spotlight products. Intrigue worthy of a le Carre novel, perhaps?

Unfortunately I never played *Galdregon's Domain*, so I can't tell you if the original storyline has been retained in *DeathBringer*. You play a barbarian from the far north, and in the course of your travels you encounter the land of Mezron. The King of the realm is seeking warriors in a desperate attempt to recover five magical gems. It seems that the ancient evil of Azazael (a mighty wizard) has been reborn under the cult of Azazael, and as the five gems were used to defeat the wizard eons ago, it is believed that they can do so again.

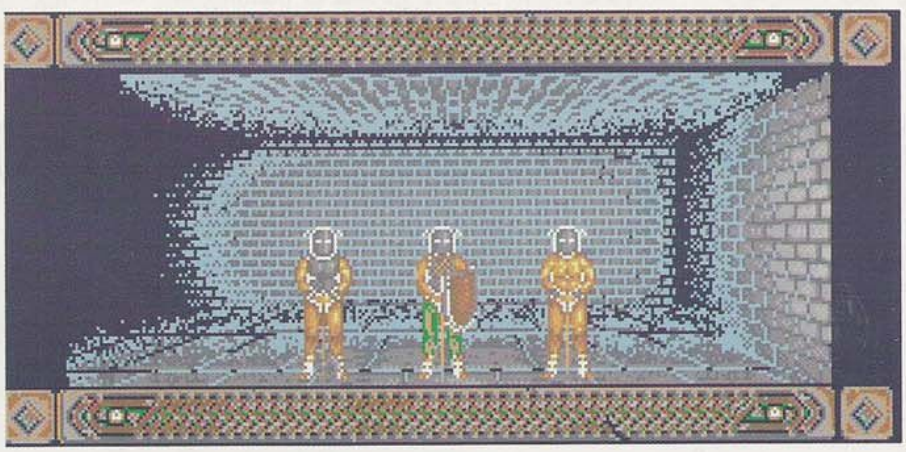
No one knows the whereabouts of the five gems today, but each is supposedly guarded by a powerful creature that must be dealt with. You then start your quest from the King's chambers with only a dagger, a lantern, some food, and your wits in your possession.

DeathBringer's graphics are reminiscent of *Dungeon Master*, though with less clarity and detail. The top half of the screen is a 3D view of your current surroundings, and scrolls accordingly with each step you take. The bottom half is split into two sets of icons: Arrows to the right (to indicate directions of movement), and a series of action buttons to the left. Clicking on these buttons brings up a series of menus: if you click on the Potion icon, a list of the potions in your inventory is displayed. Similarly, click on the Combat icon to select your weapon and initiate battle, and so forth. Other buttons include a Fitness button (check on your health), a Spells button (magic), and a Commands button (lets you access subcommands like Open/Close doors, Talk, Run, and more). Though the graphics may not be excellent, the use of colours both inside (in the dungeons) and outside (in the countryside) is well done. The monsters you face are clearly distinguishable (though not animated), and when they die, a neat pile of gray dust forms on the floor.

DeathBringer features a wide and varied landscape for the role player to explore, including some interestingly titled locations like The Temple of Set, Assassins' Lair, Caves of Doom, Forest of Doom, Tower of the Demon Master, and Tower of the Ghost. Each is a moderate to large sized maze filled with different (mostly nasty) creatures. I'm not sure that I would like to put Mezron on my vacation list, though!

The interface is quite simple to use, with the mouse being the main object of input. However, it can be a little slow sometimes, especially during combat. Each time you start a battle, you'll have to re-select your weapon, giving your opponent time to land a few hits. You can be assured that there is a lot of combat in DeathBringer, so be prepared. One good feature about combat is that you can run away from monsters, and if they don't catch up, safely make it to the inner sanctums of many of the mazes. Always remember to save that game, though!

DeathBringer could be considered an average role playing game when originally released in 1989, but in comparison with some of the newer titles of the genre (like SSI's *Eye of the Beholder*, Mindscape's *Captive*, or even *Chaos Strikes Back*) it rates pretty low. Experienced role players with time on their hands might want to give *DeathBringer* a try, but make sure you have a look at it in the shop first. ❑

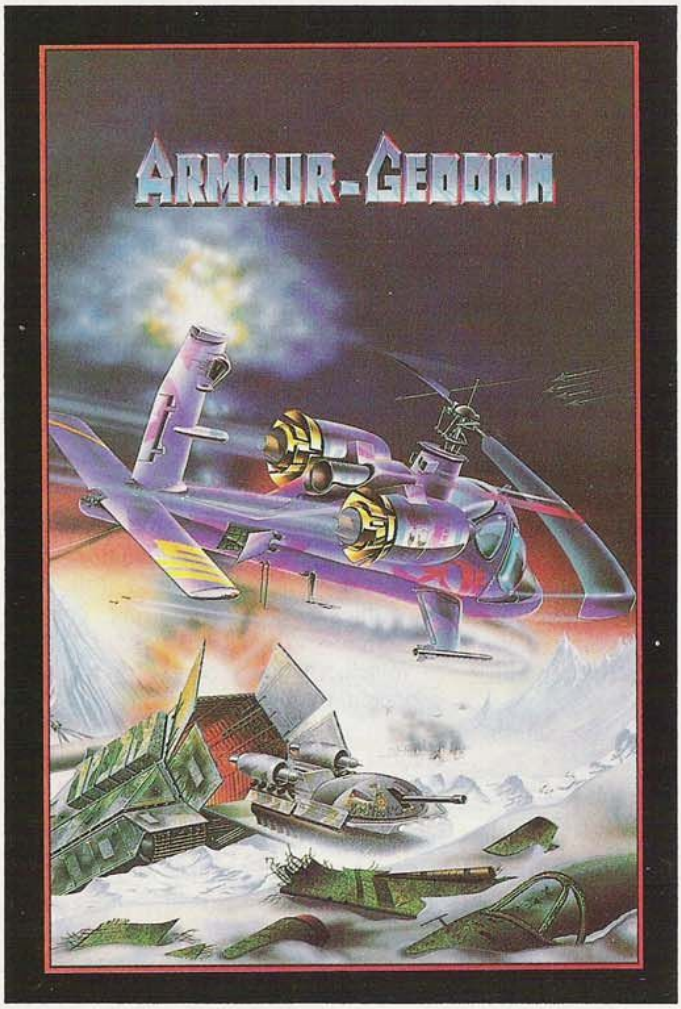


Ratings:

Graphics:	70%
Sound/Music:	65%
Gameplay:	60%
Overall:	65%

Distributed by:
Pactronics
(02) 748 4700
RRP Amiga $19.95
C 64 $19.95

Ominous name. Ominous game. *Peter Diegutis* prepares to meet his maker in ...



I'm sitting in the cockpit of the latest stealth fighter, the chance to save the world within my grasp. The controls blink and buzz before my eyes and I prepare to take off into the wild blue yonder.

But it's not to be. An urgent message flashes across my information screen warning of an enemy attack and I'm completely unprepared. Taking off is the only way I can save myself as the aggressor aircraft move in swiftly to launch their missiles. But taking off is easier said than done as I frantically search the keyboard to find out how to control my fighter.

The radar screen shows the attackers moving in and I can easily see the missiles arching towards me. My protection shield holds for a while but their strikes are becoming more effective.

My view of the terrain through the aircraft canopy shakes violently as hits penetrate the shield gradually wrecking the controls. The end comes suddenly when the stealth fighter and I are destroyed and the monitor's view pans back showing the aircraft exploding noisily and burning in a cloud of smoke.

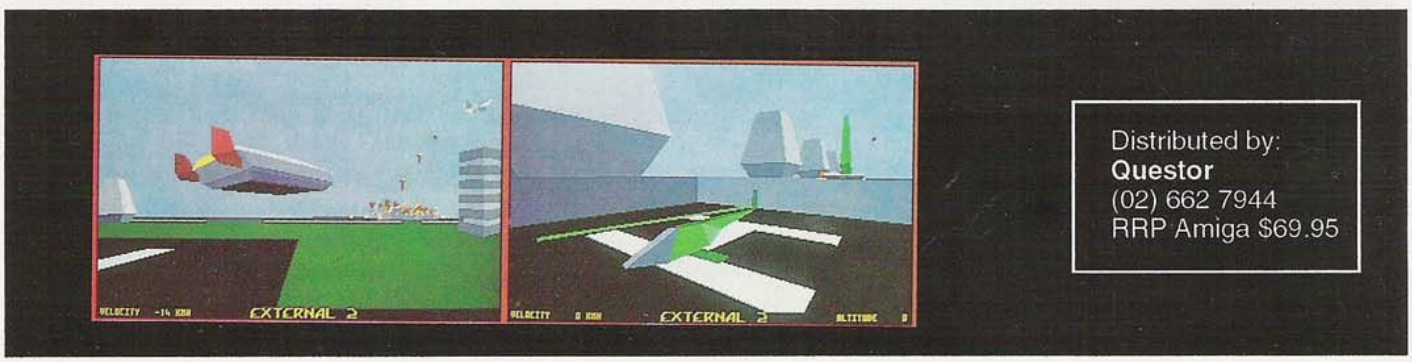
Armour-Geddon is set somewhere in the future in the period immediately after a global war. Civilisation has been virtually destroyed and some of the survivors, such as you and me, have developed a way of life underground. Those who survived on the earth's surface are miffed by our success and are building a laser cannon which they intend to fire at an orbiting satellite reflecting the beam back to earth to fry yours truly.

Only a neutron bomb can upset this dastardly plan. But wouldn't you know it, the only bomb manufactured was dismantled into five sections in the past and hidden somewhere around the 80km by 80km landscape.Our job is to assembe the bomb, while dodging the defence.

Well, here we go again. There are six types of vehicles, and a variety of weapons at my disposal, so this time I decide to launch a hovercraft armed with rockets, missiles and a laser. Very easy to fly and I get away from headquarters without any aggro from the other side. But this peaceful interlude doesn't last long because the enemy fighters find me once again and reduce the hovercraft to a wreck in short time. It's time to get some of my own back so I arm one of the stealth bombers with missiles, bombs and rockets and head out to meet the foe. Blast, it's night on the surface and I did not think about installing a night sight.

Besides the bomber and fighter, you can fly a helicopter or hovercraft and drive a heavy or light tank. As I become more familiar with the controls via the keyboard and joystick, I find I'm surviving a little longer each time. But the end result always seems to be the same - a ball of flames and smoke.

Armour-Geddon becomes more enjoyable as you grow in experience. It is not a simple game, as it requires planned use of resources to achieve its aim of building and delivering the neutron bomb. But, so far I'm a long way from achieving this ambition. ❑



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Adventurer's Realm

by Michael Spiteri

Welcome once again to the land of the Realm, the only article in Australia dedicated to serving adventurers on Commodore computers. Christmas is almost here, so this month we check out some hot products. If you are stuck in any adventure game, or can offer hints and tips, or if you would just like to comment, write to:
Adventurers Realm, 12 Bridle Place, Pakenham Vic 3810
If role playing games (RPG's) are your scene, then Kamikaze Andy (alias Andy Phang) resides deep in his Dungeon to answer all your queries. His address is:
Realm's Dungeon, P.O.Box 315, Maddington WA 6109
ALWAYS ENCLOSE A STAMPED ADDRESSED ENVELOPE

The Official Adventurers Realm Hint Book(s)

This hint book is still available - but for a limited time only. The book sells for only $9.00 and contains hints for many of the Sierra series (*Kings Quest, Police Quest, Space Quest*), as well as *Zak McKracken* and *Maniac Mansion*. In fact, over 40 games are included, plus lots of other goodies. Available at a newsagent near you, or from the magazine.

Response to the first hint book was so great, that shortly, number two will be released containing solutions to the hottest games on the market (*Kings Quest V, Sorcerers Get All The Girls*, etc). Keep on the lookout for it!

Free Hint Sheets

The following hints sheets are free, free, free!! Simply select up to four hint sheets, and enclose a stamped addressed envelope (if you don't - you won't get anything!), and send it to:

Free Hint Sheets 12 Bridle Place Pakenham Vic 3810

Zak McKracken, Maniac Mansion, Indy, Zork I, Zork II, Zork III, Bards Tale I, Bards Tale II, Bards Tale III, Guild of Thieves, Jinxter, Pawn, Fish, Uninvited, Deja Vu, Hampstead, Hitchhikers Guide, Faery Tale, Borrowed Time, NeverEndingStory, Dracula Pt2, Hobbit, and Clever Contacts List Sheet.

Problems, Problems & more Problems or the Troubled Adventurers Dept.

The following adventurers are sick, so sick in fact that they need help.....badly!

First sicko is Cathi Cherry of Lauderdale in Tassie. Cathi is stuck in *Dragonworld*, and she would like to know how to get the oars and how to row to the island.

Then we have David Heydon who is having serious problems in *Dungeon Master*. He thinks he is almost on the last level. He has the master key, but there are six doors upstairs in the *Tomb of the Firestaff*, and David needs keys for all of them. He has killed the red dinosaur, but is now stuck in a place surrounded by rings of fire and a floating dude. As you can see, David is up to his neck in problems.

Shayne Cooper from Wagga Wagga in NSW would like some help in *Alternate Reality: The Dungeon*. Shayne would like to find out the answers to the three riddles posed by the gargoyle on the third level. Also, in the game *Wasteland*, what does Shayne do after he has wiped out the Base Conchise.

Wayne Phillips from Pakenham Upper would really love some help in *Ultima V*. He needs a magic item to help him climb over mountains. Wayne would also like the magic words for the dungeons Covetous, and Hythloth.

Also, how does Wayne get answers out of the fighter in *Trunsic?*

Jenny Argyrous is currently pondering problems in *Legend of Blacksilver*. Jenny writes... "I'm over on the island of Maelbane, having rescued the king and reached the level of Knight. I have been as far as I can through the labyrinth but cannot get past the locked door in the courtyard - where is the key?" Jenny also wants to know how to get past level 7 (her light spell keeps fading).

Peter Gillespie is having trouble get-

ting captured Methanoid factories to output any minerals in the game *Deuteros*. This is even after having used a bandaid and importing more dericks (!). Can anyone help Peter and his dericks?

Karen Stephenson of Kelmscott in WA would like some help in *Operation Stealth*. She wants to know how to open the safe in the study. Karen has tried using the decoder, but this hasn't achieved anything...yet.

Nick Plowman requires some help in *Shadowgate*. Simply, the mirrors are posing a problem for Nick. Can anyone help? ❑

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Help, Help & more Help or the Smart Adventurers Dept.

Many thanks to all the smart adventurers who sent in the following hints and tips to bring relief to previously troubled adventurers.

Game: **Buck Rogers**

For: The Loser (August issue)

From: Adrian Jenkin, Elizabeth North, SA.

Help: The objective of this stage is to clear the ship of the enemy mutants. On level 6 is the sick bay - use code A22151. On level 9 is the ship's computer - he will help you purge the ship.

Game: **Hero's Quest**

For: Benjamin Clarke and Terry Travers (September issue)

From: Scott Wilson, Launceston, Tasmania.

Help for Benjamin: Upon entering the room with the chandelier, lock the door. Then, quickly move up to the door in the right hand corner of the screen and move the chair.

Now the brigand leaders should enter from the left. Quickly move the candelabra, and move to the front of the table. When the bandits approach, jump on the table, and use the rope. After the action quickly escape through the door in the center.

Help for Terry (general hints)- The magic user is the best character to choose.- The first spell to buy is FETCH, then go to the healers house and cast it.- The next spell to get is FLAME DART, a handy weapon after some practice.- Places you can sleep include Erana's place, the Inn, and the Hermit's House (found using the detect spell at the waterfall).- Buy lot's of apples, then give them to a monster.- Ask the guard at the castle gates about different things.- Open the gate...twice, to enter the castle.- The waterfall is a good place for flying water!

Game: **Gold Rush**

For: Ron Edwards (September issue)

From: Stuart George, Springvale, Vic

Help: Before going to the hotel, visit your fathers grave and use the letter on it. Match the holes over the words to reveal a message. The clerk will not answer your requests until you have done this.

Game: **Battletech**

For: Brian Jewitt (August issue)

From: Stuart George, and Michael Bathols (Narrogin, WA)

Help: The password is the planets. The floor is a huge star map and the names of the planets make the password. Planets included in the password are PESHT, BENJAMIN, KATHIL, SUMMER, ARCHERNAR. Any planets you touch will turn into a square. Planets like this will also be included in the password.

Game: **Corruption**

For: OXO (April issue)

From: Stuart George

Help: You cannot enter the porsche. To open the safe you need he stethoscope from the hospital. Wear stethoscope and turn the dial.

Game: **Price of Magik**

For: Alex Stivala (Feb issue)

From: Red Venom

Help: To get past the ants you should cast a PC or mainframe at them (!).

Game: Legend of Faerghail

For: Daniel Marti (June issue)

From: Red Venom

Suggested solutions to the riddle: GREED, TRUTH, KNOWLEDGE ?

Game: **Sorcerers Get All The Girls**

For: Stanley Liu and Stuart George

From: Robin Haberschusz and Andy Phang

Help: To save or restore souls you need the Kabbul spell. It can be found in the location just above the library (after increasing a bust). To destroy the appliance, summon the whale, use the flamethrower (the from the purse), and open the spellbox.

Game: **The Jetsons**

For: Christopher Brisbin

From: Andy Phang

Help: Use the universal harmoniser in the ruined city in the jungle, not on the coloured door. For this door you need the crystal key from the Cloud King. ❑

The Dungeon by Kamikaze Andy

A sad bit of news for AD&D fans who have C64s. SSI's latest game for the machine, *Gateway to the Savage Frontier*, will also be the company's last 8-bit product. SSI is also uncertain of its support for the CDTV, but its range of Amiga products continues to grow (as detailed in last month's Dungeon).

The outlook for Amiga adventurers and role-players is much brighter, especially with the latest announcements from Sierra. I mentioned some of the new titles from the Californian company last month, and here are a few more juicy details.

Police Quest III: The Kindred returns you to the role of Detective Sonny Bonds, and this time you face the homicidal wrath of Jesse Bains' brother ("The Death Angel" from the previous two Police Quest games). Graphics are described as "intense" and "frighteningly realistic", since Sierra used video footage of live actors in the game. *Police Quest III* also features a booming soundtrack by Miami Vice composer Jan Hammer, and lots of digitized sound effects. However, the game is rated "adults only" because of its strong subject matter.

Dynamix looks like producing one of the games of 1992 with *The Adventures of Willy Beamish*, a whimsical graphic adventure based on the daily antics of a street-wise American kid. The graphics for Willy Beamish could have come straight out of a cartoon, with extremely fluid 3D animation on the hand painted and digitized backgrounds. The strongest selling point of Willy Beamish, though, is its innovative and amusing plot. If you ever yearned to experience life in a carefree, crazy, but fun-filled household, take a look at Willy Beamish when it appears on the Amiga early next year.

Future Sierra titles (all scheduled for release late next year) include *EcoQuest: The Search for Cetus* (an environmentally friendly game!), the sequel to *Codename: Iceman*, the sequel to *Colonel's Bequest* (titled *The Dagger of Amon-Ra*), *Quest for Glory III: The Wages of War*, and two educational quests: Bookwyrm's Mixed-Up Fairy Tales, and Castle of Doctor Brain.

Virgin Mastertronic has had great success with its re-release of budget Infocom games, and the British company has two new RPGs coming soon. The first is *Vengeance of Excalibur*, a sequel (naturally!) to *Spirit of Excalibur*. This time, the Holy Grail and the sword Excalibur has vanished, and evil grips the land in the form of the Shadowmaster. It is your task to explore the realm (this time it's Moorish Spain) and defeat the minions of the Shadowmaster before banishing the demon once and for all.

The second RPG from Virgin is based on the popular comic book hero Conan. Appropriately titled *Conan the Cimmerian*, you play the legendary warrior in his quest to free his homeland of Hyborea from the vile clutches of the evil High Priest Thoth Amon. With some scintillating graphics, Conan looks set to be a real Amiga winner this Christmas.

Adventurers over 18 might be interested in a new title from Free Spirit Software. Once more, the mightiest hero of the galaxy, Captain Brad Stallion, is back in a new scenario titled *Sex Olympics*. With three difficulty settings (easy, medium, and the obligatory hard), digitized graphics, and "unusual sound effects", *Sex Olympics* is certain to stir up as much interest as its predecessors on the Amiga.

The next game from Free Spirit will be an adaptation of the sci-fi movie The Abyss, now available. In a surprise move, arcade giants Konami are breaking into the RPG market with Champions, based on the pen and paper game of the same name. Konami will produce a whole series of games based on the superhero characters from Champions, and the first should appear on Amiga sometime next year. The real shock, though, is plans by the same company to release a RPG based on (get this) The *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles*! Yes, those radical heroes in half shells will be questing on YOUR Amiga very shortly. Be prepared for a cross between a traditional RPG (with skills and attributes) and some arcade battle sequences in the final product, also due out next year.

Finally, despite the news that software house Accolade is up for sale, products developed on the Amiga will make it to the software shelves early next year. These include *Elvira II: The Jaws of Cerberus* (rescue Elvira from nasty kidnappers while exploring old horror movie sets), *Les Manley II: Lost in LA* (rescue your old buddy Helmut Bean, and explore the seedy city with digitized backdrops and a mouse controlled menu interface), and *Conspiracy: The Deadlock Files*. ❑

Two more Clever Contacts are.....Dale Priem, P.O. Box 43, Jannalli, NSW 2226
Help offered: Space Quest 1,2,3. Larry 1, Zak McKracken, Hitchhikers Guide.
G. Beaven, P.O. Box 254, Wyong, NSW 2259
Help offered: For the C64 - Last Ninja, Might and Magic, Ultima 5, Labyrinth, Head Over Heals. For Amiga - Eye of the Beholder.
Always enclose a stamped addressed envelope when writing to a Clever Contact.

Realm Chit - Chat

Don't get too excited about the release on CDTV of *Twin Peaks* (Adventurers Realm, September 1991). Andy Phang reckons (from a reliable source) that is was all a big gag played on the readers of a particular English magazine (Strategy Plus), and things just blew out from there.

D. Coyne of 19 Newton Street, Shepparton has *Shard of Spring* on disk for the C64 (plus some others, which we couldn't mention because they are advertised new in this magazine). He would like *Pawn*, *Jinxter*, *Plundered Hearts*, or any of the *Zork* series in return.

Red Venom wrote with the following to say... "My little brother has an old Microbee with a game called *Underworld of Kin*. In the credits it says that the game was written by Dirk William and Andrew Farrell, in 1983. Could it be that Andrew Farrell (the editor) is Andrew Farrell the Microbee adventure writer? One other thing. Maybe you could enhance the layout of the adventure section by having an ornate character at the beginning of the text, just like in old english books and scrolls".

Mike: Thanks for the suggestion Red, we'll keep it in mind. Yes, editor Andrew Farrell was responsible for creating *Underworld of Kyn*, many yonks ago. The game was also available on the C64 (before you Commodore freaks start jumping up and down in protest).

Mark Gambino of Colac in Victoria writes... "Regarding Tibor Stojanovski's problem in the September issue Chit-Chat. It is not possible to buy *Bards Tale I* and *II* separate, but it is possible to buy them in a trilogy pack along with *Bards Tale III*.

"Robert Haberschusz of Hackett in ACT writes ... "Does anyone know if *Timequest* or *Spellcasting 201* are available in this country yet, as I have not seen them in any stores?"

Mike: *Timequest* has been available for a few months now (for the IBM), and it is due shortly for the Amiga. There are still no release dates available for *Spellcasting 202* yet.

David Sark of St Mary's in SA writes..."I am the proud owner of an Amiga 500. Over the years I have collected ACAR and I have witnessed a number of considerable changes, mainly the switch to colour with the game reviews. I still think the magazine needs a bit more colour, perhaps in the Adventurers Realm. Anyway, back to my reason for writing to you. I think the Realm is great, your Clever Contacts have proven quite helpful for me and I suppose for many other try hard adventurers. That is why I would like to become a clever contact ..."Mike: I'm sure you'll see more colour appearing in the magazine and the Realm.

I'm glad the Clever Contacts have helped you out - a big thanks to all the Clever Contacts for doing a fantastic job, and thanks for your letter, David.

To those who could use David's services, he can be contacts at: 54 Madgalene Terrace, St Mary's SA, 5043, and he can offer help in:

Larry II,III, Operation Stealth, Codename Iceman, Shadow of the Beast II, Loom, Neuromancer, Pools of Radiance, Hero's Quest and *Kings Quest IV.*

Hot New Releases for Christmas

It was on these pages back in September that you read about the upcoming sequel to *Mortville Manor*, titled *Maupiti Island*. Well, it is available now. Watch out for a full review in next month's Realm.

On the subject of tropical detective mysteries, a new release from Ozisoft and US Gold is *Cruise For A Corpse*. This exciting graphic adventure is set in the 1920's on board a yacht belonging to a rich Greek dude, Niklos Karaboudjan. You play the role of Inspector Raoul, who is called to solve a murder mystery - but it seems the body has gone missing! This game claims to have great graphics and great character interaction. Available for the Amiga and IBM.

US Gold and Ozisoft have also released *Gauntlet 3D: The Final Quest*, which sounds like a 3D RPG. The game takes place on a once quiet island called Capra, now shattered due to opening of the gates of Hell. So, it's you against ol' Lucifer in a demonic battle. Things are made worse with all of the food on the island being poisoned and all the inhabitants being possessed! This game is available for the C64 and Amiga.

Two hot new Sierra releases (also from Ozisoft) include *Space Quest IV: Roger Wilco and the Time Rippers*, and *Heart of China*, both featuring Sierra's new point'n'click interface, action scenes, and good graphics. In Heart of China, you take the role of Lucky Masters who has been hired to rescue the kidnapped daughter of a wealthy American investor. You get to travel, via the computer, to China, Hong Kong, Kathmandu, Paris, and Istanbul, among others. Both games are available on the IBM and Amiga.

Other notable releases from Ozisoft are *Flight of the Intruder, Operation Stealth,* and *Cybercon.* ❑

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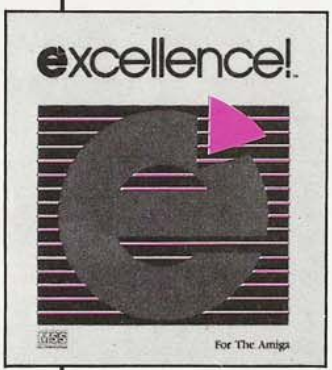

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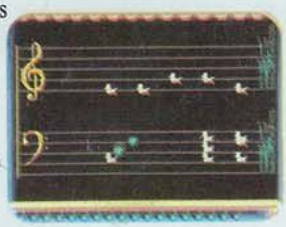

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